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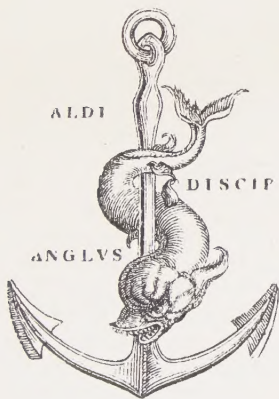


THE POEMS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER
IN SIX VOLUMES
VOL V

THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER



WITH MEMOIR BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS



VOL V

LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING

1845

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TROILUS AND CRESEIDE.

O BLISFULL light, of which the bemes clere
Adorneth all the third heaven faire,
O sonnes lefe, O Joves doughter dere,
Pleasaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentle hertes aye ready to repaire,
O very cause of heale and of gladnesse,
Yheried be thy might and thy goodnesse.

In Heaven and Hell, in earth, and salt see,
Is felt thy might, if that I well discernē,
As man, and beast, fish, herbe, and grene trec,
They fele in times with vapour eterne,
God loveth, and to love woll naught werne,
And in this world no lives creature,
Withouten love is worth, or may endure.

Ye Joves first, to thilke affectes glade
Through which that thinges liven all and be,
Commenden, and amorous hem made
On mortall thing, and as you list aye ye
Yeve hem in love, ease, or adversite :
And in a thousand formes doune hem sent
For love in earth, and whom you list he hent.

Ye fiers Mars appeasen of his ire,
And as you list, ye maken hertes digne :
Algates hem that ye woll set a fire,
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne,

Ye doen him curteis be, fresh, and benigne,
 And high or low, after a wight entendeth
 The joies that he hath, your might it sendeth.

Ye holden reigne and house in unitie,
 Ye soothfast cause of friendship ben also,
 Ye knowen all thilke covered qualitie
 Of thinges, which that folke wondren at so,
 Whan they can nat construe how it may go,
 She loveth him, or why he loveth here,
 As why this fish, and nat that commeth to were.

Ye folke a law have set in universe,
 And this know I by hem that lovers be,
 That who so striveth with you hath the werse :
 Now ladie bright, for thy benignite,
 At reverence of hem that serven thee,
 Whose clerke I am, so teacheth me devise,
 Some joy of that is felt in thy servise.

Yea, in my naked herte sentement
 In hilde, and do me shew of thy sweetnesse
 Caliope, thy voice be now present,
 For now is need, seest thou nat my distresse,
 How I mote tell anon right the gladnesse
 Of Troilus, to Venus herying,
 To the which who nede hath, God him bring.

INCIPIT LIBER TERTIUS.

LAY all this meane while this Troilus
 Recording his lesson in this manere,
 “Mafey,” thought he, “thus woll I say, and thus,
 Thus woll I plaine unto my lady dere,
 That word is good, and this shall be my chere
 This n’ill I nat foryetten in no wise,”
 God leve him werken as he can devise.

And lord so that his herte gan to quappe,
Hearing her come, and short for to sike,
And Pandarus that ledde her by the lappe,
Came nere, and gan in at the curtein pike,
And saied, "God doe bote on all that are sike,
See who is here you comen to visite,
Lo, here is she that is your death to wite."

Therewith it seemed as he wept almost,
"A, a" (quod Troilus so routhfully)
Whether me be wo, O mighty god thou wost,
Who is all there, I see nat truely :"
"Sir" (quod Creseide) "it is Pandare and I,"
"Ye sweet herte alas, I may nat rise
To kneele, and do you honour in some wise."

And dressed him upward, and she right tho
Gan both her hondes soft upon him ley,
"O for the love of God doe ye not so
To me," (quod she) "eye what is this to sey ?
Sir comen am I to you for causes twey,
First you to thonke, and of your lordship eke
Continuaunce I would you beseke."

This Troilus that heard his ladie pray
Of lordship, him wox neither quick ne dedde,
Ne might o word for shame to it say,
Although men shoulde smiten off his hedde,
But Lord so he wox sodaineliche redde :
And sir, his lesson that he wende conne
To praie her, is through his wit yronne.

Creseide all this aspied well ynough,
For she was wise, and loved him never the lasse,
All nere he in all apert, or made it tough,
Or was too bold to sing a foole a masse,
But whan his shame gan somwat to passe

His reasons, as I may my rimes hold,
I woll you tell, as teachen bookes old.

In chaunged voice, right for his very drede,
Which voice eke quoke, and thereto his manere
Goodly abasht, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, unto Creseide his ladie dere,
With looke doun cast, and humble iyolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirst word that him astart,
Was twice, "Mercy, mercy, O my sweet herte."

And stint a while, and whan he might out bring,
The next word was, "God wote for I have
As faithfully as I have had konning,
Ben yours all, God so my soule do save,
And shall, till that I wofull might be grave,
And though I dare ne can unto you plaine,
Ywis I suffer not the lasse paine.

"Thus much as now, ah, womanliche wife,
I may out bring, and if this you displease,
That shall I wreke upon mine owne life
Right soone I trow, and do your herte an ease,
If with my death your herte may appease:
But sens that ye han heard me somewhat sey,
Now retch I never how soone that I dey."

Therewith his manly sorrow to behold,
It might have made an herte of stone to rew,
And Pandare wept as he to water would,
And poked ever his nece new and new,
And saied, "Wo begon been hertes true,
For love of God, make of this thing an end,
Or slea us both at ones, ere that ye wend."

"I, what" (quod she) "by God and by my trouth
I n'ot nat what ye wilne that I sey:"

“Ey, what”(quod he) “that ye have on him routh
For Goddes love, and doeth him nat to dey:”

“Now than thus”(quod she) “I woll him prey,
To tell me the fine of his entent,
Yet wist I never well what that he ment.”

“What that I mean, O my sweet herte dere”
(Quod Troilus) “O goodly fresh and free,
That with the streames of your eyen so clere
Ye shoulde sometime friendly on me see,
And than agreeen that I may ben hee
Withouten braunch of vice, on any wise,
In trouth alway to do you my servise,

“As to my lady right, and cheefe resort,
With all my witte and all my diligence,
And to have right as you list comfort,
Under your yerde egall to mine offence,
As death, if that I breake your defence,
And that ye digne me so much honour,
Me to commaunden aught in any hour.

“And I to ben your very humble, true,
Secret, and in my paines patient,
And ever to desiren freshly new
To serven, and to ben aye like diligent,
And with good herte all hooly your talent
Receiven well, how sore that me smart,
Lo this meane I, O mine owne sweet herte.”

(Quod Pandarus) “Lo here an hard request,
And reasonable, a lady for to werne:
Now nece mine, by Natall Joves feest,
Were I a God, ye should sterve as yerne,
That heren wel this man wol nothing yerne,
But your honour, and seene him almost sterve,
And ben so loth to suffer him you to serve.”

With that she gan her eyen on him cast
Full easily, and full debonairely
Avising her, and hied not too fast,
With never a word, but saied him softly,
“ Mine honour safe, I woll well truely,
And in such forme, as I can now devise,
Receiven him fully to my servise.

“ Beseeching him for Goddes love, that he
Would in honour of trouth and gentillesse,
As I well meane, eke meanen well to me :
And mine honour with wit and businesse
Aye kepe, and if I may doen him gladnesse
From henceforth ywis I n’ill not faine :
Now beth all hole, no lenger ye ne plaine.

“ But nathelesse, this warne I you” (quod she)
“ A kinges sonne although ye be ywis,
Ye shall no more have soverainte
Of me in love, than right in that case is,
Ne n’ill forbear, if that ye doen amis
To wrath you, and while that ye me serve,
Cherishen you, right after that ye deserve.

And shortly, dere herte and all my knight,
Beth glad, and draweth you to lustinesse,
And I shall truely, withall my full might
Your bitter tournen all to sweetnesse,
If I be she that may doe you gladnesse,
For every wo ye shall recover a blisse,”
And him in armes tooke, and gan him kisse.

Fell Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen
To Heaven threw, and held his hondes hie :
“ Immortall God”(quod he) “that maiest not dien,
Cupide I meane, of this maiest glorifie,
And Venus, thou maiest maken melodie

Withouten hond, me seemeth that in toun,
For this miracle iche here eche bell soun.

“ But ho, no more now of this mattere,
For why ? This folke woll comen up anone,
That have the letter redde, lo I hem here,
But I conjure thee Creseide, and one
And two, thou Troilus whan thou maist gone
That at mine house ye hen at my warning,
For I full well shall shapen your comming.

“ And easeth there your hertes right ynough,
And let see which of you shall beare the bell
To speak of love aright,” and therwith he lough,
“ For there have I a leiser for to tell :”
(Quod Troilus) “ How long shall I here dwell
Ere this be doen ?” (quod he) “ Whan thou
maiest rise

This thing shall be right as you list devise.”

With that Heleine and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward right at the staires end,
And lord so tho gan gronen Troilus,
His mother and his suster for to blend :
(Quod Pandarus) “ It time is that we wend,
Take nece mine your leave at hem all three,
And let hem speak, and commeth forth with me.”

She tooke her leave at hem full thriftely,
As she well could, and they her reverence
Unto the full didden hartely,
And wonder well spoken in her absence
Of her, in praising of her excellence,
Her governaunce, her wit, and her manere
Commendeden, that it joy was to here.

Now let her wend unto her owne place,

And tourne we unto Troilus againe,
That gan full lightly of the letter pace,
That Deiphebus had in the garden seine,
And of Heleine and him he would feine
Delivered ben, and saied, that him lest
To slepe, and after tales have a rest.

Heleine him kist, and tooke her leave blive,
Deiphebus eke, and home went every wight,
And Pandarus as fast as he may drive
To Troilus tho came, as line right,
And on a paillet, all that glad night
By Troilus he lay, with merry chere
To tale, and well was hem they were yfere.

Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And all the dores weren fast yshet,
To tell in short, withouten words mo,
This Pandarus, without any let
Up rose, and on his beddes side him set,
And gan to speken in a sober wise
To Troilus, as I shall you devise.

“ Mine alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God wot, and thou, that it sate me so sore,
Whan I thee saw so languishing to here,
For love of which thy wo woxe alway more,
That I with all my might, and all my lore,
Have ever sithen doen my businesse
To bring thee to joye out of distresse.

“ And have it brought to such plite as thou wost
So that through me thou stondest now in way
To faren well, I say it for no host,
And wost thou why, but shame it is to say,
For thee have I begon a gamen play,

Which that I never doen shall eft for other,
All tho he were a thousand fold my brother.

“ That is to say, for thee am I becomen,
Betwixen game and earnest such a meane,
As maken women unto men to comen,
All say I nat, thou wost well what I meane,
For thee have I my nece, of vices cleane,
So fully made thy gentillesse trist,
That all shall ben right as thy selfe list.

“ But God, that all woteth, take I to witnesse,
That never I this for covetise wrought,
But only for to abredge that distresse,
For which welnie thou didest, as me thought :
But good brother do now as thee ought,
For Godes love, and kepe her out of blame,
Sins thou art wise, and save alway her name.

“ For well thou wost, the name as yet of her
Emongs the people as (who saith) halowed is,
For that man is unbore I dare well swere,
That ever wist that she did amis,
But wo is me, that I that cause all this,
May thinke that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eme, and traitour eke yfere.

“ And wer it wist, that I through mine engine
Had in mine nece yput this fantasie
To doen thy lust, and hooly to be thine :
Why all the world would upon it crie,
And say, that I the worste trecherie
Did in this case, that ever was begon,
And she fordone, and thou right nought ywou.

“ Wherfore ere I woll further gone or paas,
Yet eft I thee beseech, and fully say,

That privete go with us in this caas,
That is to saine, that thou us never wray,
And be not wroth, though I thee ofte pray,
To holden secree such an high mattere,
For skilfull is, thou wost well, my praier.

“ And thinke what wo there hath betid ere this
For making of avauntes, as men rede,
And what mischaunce in this world yet is
Fro day to day, right for that wicked dede,
For which these wise clerkes that ben dede
Have ever this proverbed to us young,
That the first vertue is to kepe the tounge.

“ And nere it that I wilne as now abredge
Diffusion of speech, I could almost
A thousand old stories thee alledge
Of women lost, through false and fooles bost,
Proverbes canst thy selfe enow, and wost
Ayenst that vice for to been a blabbe,
All saied men sooth, as often as they gabbe.

“ O tongue alas, so often here beforne
Hast thou made many a lady bright of hew,
Saied “ Welaway the day that I was borne,”
And many a maidens sorrow for to new,
And for the more part all is untrew
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve,
Of kind, none avauntour is to leve.

“ Avauntour and a lier, all is one,
As thus: I pose a woman graunt me
Her love, and saieth that other woll she none,
And I am sworne to holden it secree,
And after I tell it two or three,
Ywis I am a vauntour at the lest,
And lie eke, for I breake my behest.

“ Now looke than if they be not to blame,
Such maner folk, what shall I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunt of women, and by name,
That yet behight hem never this ne that,
Ne know hem no more than mine old hat,
No wonder is, so God me sende hele,
Though women dreden with us men to dele.

“ I say not this for no mistrust of you,
Ne for no wise men, but for fooles nice,
And for the harme that in the world is now,
As well for follie oft, as for mallice,
For well wote I, in wise folke that vice
No woman dredeth, if she be well avised,
For wise been by fooles harme chastised.

“ But now to purpose, leve brother dere,
Have all this thing that I have saied in mind,
And keep thee close, and be now of good chere
For all thy daies thou shalt me true find,
I shall thy processe set in such a kind,
And God toforne, that it shall thee suffise,
For it shall be right as thou wolt devise.

“ For well I wote, thou meanest well parde,
Therefore I dare this fully undertake,
Thou wost eke what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set the charters to make,
Have now good night, I may no lenger wake,
And bid for me, sith thou art now in blisse,
That God me sende death, or some lisse.”

Who might tellen halfe the joy or feste
Which that the soule of Troilus tho felt,
Hearing theffect of Pandarus behestes :
His old wo, that made his herte to swelt,

Gan tho for joy wasten, and to melt,
And all the richesse of his sighes sore
At ones fled, he felt of hem no more.

But right so as these holtes and these hayis
That han in winter dead ben and dry,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty beste listeth to pley,
Right in that selfe wise, sooth for to sey,
Woxe suddainly his herte full of joy,
That gladder was there never man in Troy.

And gan his looke on Pandarus up cast
Full soberly, and friendly on to see,
And saied, " Friend, in Aprill the last,
As well thou wost, if it remember thee,
How nigh the death for wo thou founde me,
And how thou diddest all thy businesse
To know of me the cause of my distresse.

" Thou wost how long I it forbare to say
To thee, that art the man that I best trist,
And perill none was it to thee to bewray,
That wist I well: but tell me if thee list,
Sith I so loth was that thy selfe it wist,
How durst I mo tellen of this matere?
That quake now, and no wight may us here.

" But nathelesse, by that God I thee swere,
That as him list may all the world governe,
And if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Mine herte cleave, all were my life eterne,
As I am mortall, if I late or yerne
Would it bewray, or durst or should conne,
For all the good that God made under sonne.

“That rather die I would, and determine
As thinketh me now, stocked in prison,
In wretchednesse, in filth, and in vermine,
Captive to cruell king Agamemnon :
And this in all the temples of this toun,
Upon the Godes all, I woll thee swere
To morow day, if that thee liketh here.

“And that thou hast so much ydoen for me,
That I ne may it nevermore deserve,
This know I well, all might I now for thee
A thousand times on a morow sterve,
I can no more, but that I woll thee serve
Right as thy slave, whether so thou wend,
For evermore, unto my lives end.

“But here with all mine herte I thee beseech,
That never in me thou deme such folly
As I shall saine : me thought by thy speech,
That this which thou me dost for companie,
I should wenen it were a baudrie,
I am not wood, all if I leude be,
It is not so, that wote I well parde.

“But he that goeth for gold, or for richesse,
On such messages, call him what ye list,
And this that thou dost, call it gentlenesse,
Compassion, and fellowship, and trist,
Depart it so, for wide where is wist
How that there is diversitie required
Betwixen thinges like, as I have lered.

“And that thou know I thinke not ne wene,
That this service a shame be or jape,
I have my faire sister Polixene,
Cassandre, Helein, or any of the frape,

Be she never so faire, or well yshape,
Tell me whiche thou wilt of everychone
To have for thine, and let me than alone.

“ But sith that thou hast done me this service,
My life to save, and for none hope of mede :
So for the love of God, this great emprise
Performe it out, now is the most nede
For high and low, withouten any drede,
I woll alway thine hestes all kepe,
Have now good night, and let us both slepe.”

Thus held hem ech of other well apaied,
That all the world ne might it bet amend,
And on the morrow when they were araied,
Ech to his owne needs gan to entend :
But Troilus, though as the fire he brend,
For sharpe desire of hope, and of pleasaunce,
He not forgate his good governaunce.

But in himself, with manhood gan restrain
Ech rakell deed, and ech unbridled chere,
That all that liven soothe for to saine,
Ne should have wist by word or by manere
What that he ment, as touching this matere,
From every wight, as ferre as is the cloud,
He was so wise, and well dissimulen coud.

And all the while which that I now devise,
This was his life, with all his full might :
By day he was in Martes high servise,
That is to saine, in armes as a knight,
And for the more part all the long night,
He lay and thought how that he might serve
His lady best, her thanke for to deserve,

N'll I not sweare, although he lay soft,
That in his thought n'as somewhat diseased,
Ne that he tourned on his pillowes oft,
And would of that him missed have ben eased,
But in such case men be nat alway pleased,
For naught I wote, no more than was he,
That can I deeme of possibilite.

But certaine is, to purpose for to go,
That in this while, as written is in geste,
He saw his lady sometime, and also
She with him spake, whan that she durst and leste,
And by hir both avise, as was the best,
Appointeden full warely in this need,
So as they durst, how they would proceed,

But it was spoken in so short a wise,
In such awaite alway, and in such feare,
Least any wight divinen or devise
Would of hem two, or to it lay an eare,
That all this world so lefe to hem ne were,
As that Cupide would hem his grace send,
To maken of hir spech right an end.

But thilke little that they spake or wrought,
His wise ghost tooke aye of all such hede,
It seemed her he wiste what she thought,
Withouten word, so that it was no nede
To bid him aught to doen, or aught forbede,
For which she thought that love, all come it late,
Of all joy had opened her the yate.

And shortly of this processe for to pace,
So well his werke and wordes he beset,
That he so full stood in his ladies grace,
That twenty thousand times ere she let,

She thonked God she ever with him met,
So could he him governe in such servise,
That all the world ne might it bet devise.

For she found him so discreet in all,
So secret, and of such obeisaunce,
That well she felt he was to her a wall
Of steel, and shield of every displeasaunce,
That to been in his good governaunce,
So wise he was, she was no more afered,
I meane as ferre as aught ben requered.

And Pandarus to quicke alway the fire,
Was ever ylike prest and diligent,
To ease his friend was set all his desire,
He shone aye on, he to and fro was sent,
He letters bare, whan Troilus was absent,
That never man, as in his friendes nede,
Ne bare him bet than he, withouten drede.

But now peraventure some man waiten would
That every word, or sond, look, or chere
Of Troilus, that I rehearcen should,
In all this while, unto his lady dere,
I trow it were a long thing for to here,
Or of what wight that stant in such disjoint
His wordes all, or every looke to point.

Forsooth I have not herd it done ere this,
In story none, ne no man here I wene,
And though I would, I could not ywis,
For there was some epistle hem betwene,
That would (as saith mine autor) wel contene
Nie half this boke, of which him list not write,
How should I than a line of it endite ?

But to the great effect, than say I thus,
That stonden in concord and in quiete
This ilke two, Creseide and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this time swete,
Save onely often might they not mete,
Ne leisure have, hir speeches to fulfell,
That it befell right as I shall you tell,

That Pandarus, that ever did his might,
Right for the fine that I shall speake of here,
As for to bringen to his house some night
His faire nece, and Troilus yfere,
Where as at leiser all this high matere
Touching hir love were at the full up bound,
Had out of doubt a time to it found.

For he with great deliberation
Had every thing that thereto might availe
Forne cast, and put in execution,
And nether left for cost ne for travaile,
Come if hem liste, hem should nothing faile,
And for to ben in aught aspied there,
That wist he well an impossible were.

Dredelesse it clere was in the wind
Of every pie, and every let game,
Now all is well, for all the world is blind
In this matter, both fremed and tame,
This timber is all ready up to frame,
Us lacketh naught, but that we weten would
A certaine houre, in which she comen should.

And Troilus, that all this purveyaunce
Knew at the full, and waited on it aye,
And hereupon eke made great ordinaunce,
And found his cause, and therewith his arraye,

If that he were missed night or day,
They thought there while he was about this servise,
That he was gone to done his sacrifice,

And must at such a temple alone wake,
Answered of Apollo for to be,
And first to sene the holy laurer quake,
Er that Apollo spake out of the tree,
To tellen him next whan Greeks should fie,
And forthy let him no man, God forbede,
But pray Apollo helpe in this nede.

Now is there litell more for to done,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to saine,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the Mone,
Whan lightlesse is the world a night or twaine,
And that the welken shope him for to raine,
He streight a morrow unto his nece went,
Ye have well herde the fine of his entent.

Whan he was comen, he gan anon to play,
As he was wont, and of himselfe to jape,
And finally he swore, and gan her say,
By this and that, she should him not escape,
No lenger done him after her to gape :
But certainly, she must, by her leve,
Come soupen in his house with him at eve.

At which she lough, and gan her first excuse,
And said : " It raineth : lo, how should I gone,"
" Let be," (quod he) " ne stonde not thus to muse,
This mote be don, ye shal come there anone,"
So at the last, hereof they fell at one :
Or eles fast he swore her in her eere,
He nolde never comen there she were.

Sone after this, she to him gan rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there,
He swore her nay, for he was out of towne :
And said, " Nece, I suppose that he were there,
You durst never thereof have the more fere ?
For rather that men might him there aspie,
Me were lever a thousand folde to die."

Naught list mine auctour fully to declare,
What that she thought, whan as he said so,
That Troilus was out of towne yfare,
And if he said thereof soth or no,
But that withouten awaite with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he her that besought,
And as his nece obeyed as her ought.

But nathelesse, yet gan she him besech,
(Although with him to gone it was no fere)
For to beware of gofisshe peoples spech,
That dremen thinges, which that never were,
And wel avise him whom he brought there :
And said him, " Eme, sens I must on you trist,
Loke al be wel, and do now as you list."

He swore her this by stockes and by stones,
And by the Goddes that in Heven dwell,
Or eles were him lever soule and bones,
With Pluto king, as depe ben in Hell
As Tantalus : what should I more tell ?
Whan al was wel, he rose and toke his leve,
And she to souper came whan it was eve.

With a certaine number of her own men,
And with her faire nece Antigone,
And other of her women nine or ten,
But who was glad now, who, as trowe yee ?

But Troilus, that stode and might it see
Throughout a litel window in a stewe,
Ther he beshet, sith midnight, was in mewe,

Unwist of every wight, but of Pandare.
But to the point, now whan that she was come,
With al joy, and al her frendes in fare,
Here eme anon in armes hath her nome,
And than to the souper al and some,
Whan as time was, full softe they hem set,
God wot there was no deinte ferre to fet.

And after souper gonnen they to rise,
At ease well, with herte full fresh and glade,
And wel was him that coude best devise
To liken her, or that her laughen made,
He songe, she plaide, he told a tale of Wade :
But at the last, as every thing hath end,
She toke her leave, and nedes would thence wend.

But O Fortune, executrice of wierdes,
O influences of these hevens hie,
Soth is, that under God ye ben our hierdes,
Though to us beestes ben the causes wrie :
This mene I now, for she gan homward hie ;
But execute was all beside hir leve,
At the goddes wil, for which she must bleve.

The bente Mone with her hornes all pale,
Saturnus and Jove, in Cancro joyned were,
That such a raine from Heven gan availe,
That every maner woman that was there,
Had of that smoky raine a very feere :
At which Pandare tho lough, and said thenne,
“ Now were it time a lady to go henne.”

“But good nece, if I might ever please
You any thing, than pray I you,” (quod he)
“To don mine herte as now so great an ease,
As for to dwell here al this night with me,
For why? this is your owne house parde:
For by my trouth, I say it nat in game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame.”

Creseïde, which that could as much good
As halfe a world, toke hede of his praire,
And sens it rained, and al was in a flode,
She thought, “As good chepe may I dwel here
And graunt it gladly with a frendes chere,
And have a thonk, as grutch and than abide,
For home to go it may nat well betide.

“I wol,” (quod she) “mine uncle lief and dere,
Sens that you list, it skill is to be so,
I am right glad with you to dwellen here,
I said but agame that I would go,”
“Ywis graunt mercy nece,” (quod he) “tho:
Were it agame or no, sothe to tell,
Now am I glad, sens that you list to dwel.”

Thus al is wel, but tho began aright
The newe joy, and al the fest againe,
But Pandarus, if goodly had he might,
He would have hied her to bedde full faine,
And said, “O Lord this is an huge raine,
This were a wether for to sleepen in,
And that I rede us soone to begin.

“And nece, wote ye where I woll you lay,
For that we shul not liggen ferre a sonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dare I say,
Here noise of raine, ne yet of thonder?”

By God right in my closet yonder,
And I wol in that utter house alone,
Ben wardain of your women everichone.

“And in this middle chambre that ye se,
Shal your women slepen, wel and soft,
And there I said, shal your selven be :
And if ye liggen wel to night, come oft,
And careth not what wether is aloft.
The wine anone, and whan so you lest,
Go we to slepe, I trowe it be the best.”

There n'is no more, but hereafter sone
They voide, dronke, and travers draw anone,
Gan every wight that hath nought to done
More in the place, out of the chambre gone,
And ever more so stereliche it rone,
And blewe therwith so wonderliche loude,
That wel nigh no man heren other coude.”

Tho Pandarus her eme, right as him ought
With women, such as were her most about,
Ful glad unto her beddes side her brought,
And toke his leave, and gan ful lowe lout,
And said, “Here at this closet dore without,
Right overtwhart, your women liggen all,
That whom ye list of hem, ye may sone call.”

Lo whan that she was in the closet laid,
And al her women forth by ordinaunce,
A bedde weren, there as I have said,
There n'as no more to skippen nor to praunce,
But boden go to bedde with mischaunce,
If any wight stering were any where,
And let hem slepen, that abedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel couth eche adele,
The old daunce, and every point therin,
Whan that he saw that all thing was wele,
He thought he wold upon his werke begin :
And gan the stewe dore al soft unpin,
As still as a stone, without lenger let,
By Troilus adoun right he him set.

And shortly to the point right for to gone,
Of al this werke he told him worde and end,
And said, " Make thee redy right anone,
For thou shalt into Heven blisse wend."
" Now blisfull Venus, thou me grace send,"
(Quod Troilus) " for never yet no dede,
Had I er now, ne halfendele the drede."

(Quod Pandarus) " Ne drede thee never a dele,
For it shal be right as thou wolt desire,
So thrive I, this night shall I make it wele,
Or casten all the gruel in the fire."
" Yet blisful Venus this night thou me enspire,"
(Quod Troilus) " as wis as I the serve,
And ever bet and bet shall till I sterue.

" And if I had, O Venus ful of mirth,
Aspectes badde of Mars, or of Saturne,
Or thou combuste, or let were in my birth,
Thy father pray, al thilke harme disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayen may turne :
For love of him thou lovedst in the shawe,
I mean Adon, that with the bore was slawe.

" Jove eke, for the love of faire Europe,
The which in forme of a bulle away thou fet :
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy bloody cope
For love of Cipria, thou me naught ne let :

O Phebus, think when Daphne her selven shet
Under the barke, and laurer wore for drede,
Yet for her love, O help now at this nede.

“Mercurie, for the love of her eke,
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wroth,
Now helpe, and eke Diane I the beseke,
That this viage be nat to the loth :
O fatall sustren, which or any cloth
Me shapen was, my destine me sponne,
So helpeth to this werke that is begonne.”

(Quod Pandarus) “Thou wretched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she will the bite ?
Why do on this furred cloke on thy sherte,
And folow me, for I wol have the wite :
But bide, and let me gon before alite,”
And with that he gan undone a trappe,
And Troilus he brought in by the lappe.

The sterne winde so loude gan for to rout
That no wight other noise might here,
And they that laien at the dore without,
Ful sikerly they slepten al yfere :
And Pandarus, with ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon withouten lette,
There as they lay, and softly it shette.

And as he came ayen prively
His nece awoke, and asketh, “Who goeth there?”
“My owne dere nece,” (quod he) “it am I,
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere,”
And nere he came, and said her in her eere :
“No worde for love of God I you besech,
Let no wight arise, and here of our spech.”

“What, which way be ye comen? benedicite,”
(Quod she) “and how unwiste of hem all?”

“Here at this secrete trap dore,” (quod he)
(Quod tho Creseide) “Let me some wight call:”

“Eigh, God forbid that it should so fall,”
(Quod Pandarus) “that ye such foly wrought,
“They might demen thing they never er thought.

“It is nat good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause for to devine,
Your women slepen al, I undertake,
So that for hem the house men might mine,
And slepen wollen till the Sunne shine,
And whan my tale is brought to an end,
Unwist right as I came, so wol I wende.

“Now nece mine, ye shul well understonde,”
(Quod he) “so as ye women demen all,
That for to hold in love a man in honde,
And him her lefe and dere herte to call,
And maken him an howne above to call:
I mene, as love an other in this mene while,
She doth her selfe a shame, and him a gile.

“Now whereby that I tel you al this,
Ye wote your selfe, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthiest wight
One of the world, and therto trouth yplight,
That but it were on him alone, ye n’old
Him never falsen, while ye liven should.

“Now stonte it thus, that sith I fro you went,
This Troilus, right platly for to seine,
Is through a gutter by a privy went,
Into my chambre come in al this reine:

Unwist of every maner wight certaine,
Save of my selfe, as wisely have I joy,
And by the faith I owe to Priam of Troy.

“ And he is come in such paine and distresse,
That but if he be al fully wood by this,
He sodainly mote fal into woodnesse,
But if God helpe : and cause why is this ?
He saith him tolde is of a frende of his,
How that ye should loven one, that hight Horast,
For sorow of which this night shal be his last.”

Creseide, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodainly about her herte cold,
And with a sighe she sorowfully answerd,
“ Alas, I wende who so ever tales told,
My dere herte woulde me nat have hold
So lightly faulse : alas conceites wrong,
What harm they done, for now live I to long.

“ Horaste alas, and falsen Troilus,
I know him not, God helpe me so,” (quod she)
“ Alas, what wicked spirite told him thus,
Now certes, eme, to morrow and I him se,
I shal therof as full excusen me,
As ever did woman, if him like,”
And with that word she gan ful sore sike.

“ O God,” (quod she) “ so worldly selinesse
Which clerkes callen false felicite,
Ymedled is with many bitternesse,
Ful anguishous, than is, God wote,” (quod she)
“ Condicion of veine prosperite,
For either joyes comen nat yfere,
Or eles no wight hath hem alway here.

“O brotil wele of mannes joy unstable,
With what wight so thou be, or thou who play,
Either he wote, that thou joy art mutable,
Or wote it nat, it mote ben one of tway :
Now if he wot it nat, how may he say,
That he hath very joy and silinesse,
That is of ignorance aie in derkenesse ?

“Now if he wote that joy is transitory,
As every joy of worldly thing mote flee,
Than every time he that hath in memory,
The drede of lesing, maketh him that he
May in no parfite sikernes be :
And if to lese his joy, he set a mite,
Than semeth it, that joy is worth ful lite.

“Wherefore I wol define in this matere,
That truely for aught I can espie,
There is no very wele in this world here.
But O thou wicked serpent Jalousie,
Thou misbeleved, and envious folie,
Why hast thou Troilus made to me untrist,
That never yet agilte, that I wist ?”

(Quod Pandarus) “Thus fallen is this caas.”

“Why uncle mine,” (quod she) “who told him this,
And why doth my dere herte thus, alas ?”

“Ye wote, ye nece mine,” (quod he) “what it is,
I hope al shal we wel, that is amis,
For ye may quenche al this, if that you lest,
And doeth right so, I hold it for the best.”

“So shal I do to morrow, ywis,” (quod she)

“And God toforne, so that it shall suffice :”

“To morow alas, that were faire,” (quod he)

“Nay nay, it may nat stonden in this wise :

For nece mine, this writen clerkes wise,
That peril is with dretching in drawe,
Nay soche abodes ben nat worth an hawe.

“ Nece, all thing hath time I dare avow,
For whan a chambre a fire is or an hall,
Well more nede is, it sodainly rescow,
Than to disputen and aske amonges all,
How the candle in the strawe is fall :
Ah benedicite, for al among that fare,
The harme is done, and farwel feldefare.

“ And nece mine, ne take it nat a grefe,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God helpe me so, ye had him never lefe,
That dare I sain, now there is but we two,
But wel I wote that ye wol nat so do,
Ye ben to wise to done so great folie,
To put his life al night in jeopardie.”

“ Had I him never lefe? By God I wene,
Ye had never thing so lefe,” (quod she.)
“ Now by my thrifte,” (quod he) “ that shall be
For sith ye make this ensample of me, [sene,
If iche al night would him in sorow se,
For al the treasour in the toune of Troie,
I bidde God, I never mote have joie,

“ Now loke than, if ye that ben his love,
Should put his life al night in jeopardie,
For thing of nought : now by that God above
Nat onely this delay cometh of folie,
But of malice, if that I should nat lie :
What, platly and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bounte done ne gentilnesse.”

(Quod tho Creseide) “ Wol ye done o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disease,
Have here and bere to him this blew ring,
For there is nothing might him better plesse,
Save I my selfe, ne more his herte apese,
And say, my dere herte, that his sorow,
Is causelesse, that shal he sene to morow.”

“ A ring,” (quod he) “ ye hasel wodes shaken,
Ye nece mine, that ring must have a stone,
That might deed men alive all maken,
And such a ring trowe I that yee have none :
Discrecion out of your heed is gone,
That fele I now,” (quod he) “ and that is routh :
O time ylost, wel maist thou cursen slouth.

“ Wote ye not wel that noble and hie corage
Ne soroweth nat, ne stinteth eke for lite,
But if a foole were in a jelous rage,
I n’old setten at his sorow a mite,
But feste him with a fewe wordes all white,
Another day, whan that I might him find ;
But this thing stant al in another kind.

“ This is so gentle and so tender of herte,
That with his death he wol his sorrows wreke
For trust it well, how sore that him smart,
He woll to you no jealous wordes speke,
And forthy nece, er that his herte breke,
So speke your selfe to him of this matere,
For with a worde ye may his herte stere.

“ Now have I told what peril he is in,
And is coming unwist is to every wight,
Ne parde harme may there be none, ne sin,
I wol my self be with you all this night,

Ye know eke how it is your owne knight,
And that by right, ye must upon him triste,
And I al prest to fetch him whan you liste."

This accident so pitous was to here,
And eke so like a sothe, at prime face,
And Troilus her knight, to her so dere,
His prive comming, and the siker place,
That though she did him as than a grace,
Considred all thinges as they now stood,
No wonder is, sens he did al for good.

Creseide answerde, "As wisely God at rest
My soule bring, as me is for him wo,
And, eme, ywis, faine would I don the best,
If that I grace had for to do so,
But whether that ye dwell, or for him go,
I am, till God me better minde send,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes end."

(Quod Pandarus) "Ye, nece, wol ye here,
Dulcarnon is called Fleming of wretches,
It semeth herd, for wretches wol nought lere,
For very slouth, or other wilfull tetches,
This is said by hem that be not worth two fetches,
But ye ben wise, and that ye han on hond,
N'is neither harde, ne skilfull to withstond."

"Than, eme," (quod she) "doeth here as you list,
But ere he come, I wol up first arise,
And for the love of God, sens all my trist
Is on you two, and ye beth bothe wise,
So werketh now, in so discrete a wise,
That I honour may have and he plesaunce,
For I am here, al in your governaunce."

“That is well said,” (quod he) “my nece dere,
There good thrifte on that wise gentill herte,
But liggeth still, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth nat no ferther for him start,
And eche of you easeth other sorowes smart,
For love of God, and Venus I the hery,
For sone hope I, that we shall ben mery.”

This Troilus full sone on knees him sette,
Ful sobrely, right by her beddes heed,
And in his beste wise his lady grette :
But lord so she woxe sodainliche reed,
Ne though men should smiten of her heed,
She could not o word a right out bring,
So sodainly for his sodaine coming.

But Pandarus, that so wel coulde fele
In every thing, to play anon began,
And said, “Neece se how this lord gan knele :
How for your trouth, se this gentil man :”
And with that worde, he for a quishen ran,
And saied, “Kneleth now while that thou lest,
There God your hertes bring sone at rest.”

Can I naught sain, for she bad him nat rise,
If sorow it put out of remembraunce,
Or eles that she toke it in the wise
Of duetie, as for his observaunce,
But well find I, she did him this pleasaunce,
That she him kist, although she siked sore,
And bad him sit adoun withouten more.

(Quod Pandarus) “Now woll ye well begin,
Now doth him sitte downe, good nece dere
Upon your beddes side, al there within,
That ech of you the bet may other here,”

And with that worde he drew him to the fiere,
And toke a light, and founde his countenaunce,
As for to loke upon an old romaunce.

Creseide that was Troilus lady right,
And clere stode in a ground of sikernesse,
All thought she her servant and her knight
Ne should none untrouth in her gesse :
That nathelesse, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of such folie,
Thus to him spake she of his jelousie.

“ Lo, herte mine, as would the excellence
Of love, ayenst the which that no man may,
Ne ought eke goodly maken resistence,
And eke bicause I felte wel and say,
Your great trouth, and service every day :
And that your herte al mine was, soth to saine,
This drove me for to rewe upon your paine.

“ And your goodnes have I founden alway yet,
Of which, my dere herte, and al my knight,
I thanke it you, as ferre as I have wit,
Al can I nat as much as it were right,
And I emforth my conning and my might
Have, and aie shal, how sore that ye smert,
Ben to you trew and hole with all mine herte.

“ And dredelesse that shal be founden at preve,
But, herte mine, what al this is to sain
Shall well be told, so that ye nought you greve
Though I to you right on your self complain,
For there with meane I finally the pain,
That halte your herte and mine in heavinessse,
Fully to slaine, and every wrong redresse.

“ My good mine, not I, for why ne how
That jelousie alas, that wicked wivere,
Thus causelesse is copen into you,
The harme of which I would faine delivere :
Alas, that he all hole or of him some slivere
Should have his refute in so digne a place,
That Jove, him sone out of your herte race.

“ But O thou, O auctour of nature,
Is this an honour to thy dignite,
That folke ungilty suffren here injure,
And who that gilty is, al quite goeth he ?
O were it lefull for to plaine of the,
That undeserved sufferest jealousie,
O, that I would upon thee plaine and crie.

“ Eke al my wo is this, that folke now usen
To saine right thus : ye jealousie is love,
And would a bushel of venim al excusen,
For that a grane of love is on it shove,
But that wote high Jove that sit above,
If it be liker love, hate, or grame,
And after that it ought beare his name.

“ But certaine is, some maner jealousie
Is excusable, more than some ywis,
As whan cause is, and some such fantasie
With pite so well expressed is,
That it unneth doeth or saith amis,
But goodly drinketh up al his distresse,
And that excuse I for the gentillesse.

“ And some so full of fury is, and despite,
That it surmounteth his repression,
But, herte mine, ye be not in that plite,
That thonke I God, for which your passion,

I will nat call it but illusion
Of haboundance of love, and besie cure,
That doth your herte this disease endure.

“Of whiche I am sory, but not wrothe,
But for my devoir and your hertes rest,
Whan so you list, by ordal or by othe,
By sorte, or in what wise so you lest,
For love of God, let preve it for the best,
And if that I be gilty, do me die,
Alas, what might I more done or seie.”

With that a few bright teeres new,
Out of her eyen fel, and thus she seid,
“Now God thou wost, in thought ne dede untrew
To Troilus was never yet Creseid,”
With that her heed down in the bed she leid,
And with the shete it wrigh, and sighed sore,
And held her pece, nat a word spake she more.

But now help God, to quench al this sorow,
So hope I that he shall, for he best may,
For I have sene of a full misty morow,
Folowen ful oft a mery somers day,
And after winter foloweth grene May,
Men sene all day, and reden eke in stories,
That after sharpe shoures ben victories.”

This Troilus, whan he her wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him list nat to slepe,
For it thought him no strokes of a yerde
To here or see Creseide his lady wepe,
But well he felt about his herte crepe,
For every teare which that Creseide astert,
The crampe of death, to straine him by the herte,

And in his minde he gan the time accurse
That he came there, and that he was borne,
For now is wicke tourned into worse,
And all that labour he hath doen beforne,
He wende it lost, he thought he nas but lorne,
“O Pandarus,” thought he, “alas thy wile,
Serveth of nought, so welaway the while.”

And therewithall he hing adoun his hedde,
And fell on knees, and sorowfully he sight,
What might he sain? he felt he n’as but dedde,
For wroth was she that should his sorows light:
But nathelesse, whan that he spoken might,
Than said he thus, “God wote that of this game,
Whan all is wist, than am I not to blame.”

Therwith the sorow of his herte shet,
That from his eyen fell there nat a tere,
And every spirite his vigour in knet,
So they astonied or oppressed were:
The feling of sorrow, or of his fere,
Or aught els, fledde were out of toune,
A doune he fell all sodainly in swoune.

This was no little sorrow for to se,
But all was husht, and Pandare up as fast,
“O nece, peace, or we be lost” (quod he.)
Bethe nat agast, but certain at last,
For this or that, he into bedde him cast,
And saied, “O thefe, is this a mannes herte?”
And off he rent all to his bare sherte.

And saied “Nece, but and ye helpe us now,
Alas your owne Troilus is forlorne.”
“Ywis so would I, and I wist how,
Full fain” (quod she) “alas that I was borne.”

“Ye, nece, woll ye pullen out the thorne
That sticketh in his herte?” (quod Pandare)
“Say all foryeve, and stint is all this fare.”

“Ye, that to me” (quod she) “full lever were
Than all the good the Sunne about goeth,”
And therewithall she swore him in his eare,
“Ywis my dere herte I am not wrothe,
Have here my trouth, and many other othe,
Now speake to me, for it am I Creseide :”
But all for naught, yet might he nat abreide.

Therwith his poulce, and paums of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples twain,
And to deliver him fro bitter bondes,
She oft him kist, and shortly for to sain,
Him to rewaken she did all her pain,
And at the last he gan his breath to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe.

And gan bet minde, and reason to him take,
But wonder sore he was abashed ywis,
And with a sigh whan he gan bet awake
He saied, “O mercy God, what thing is this?”
“Why do ye with your selven thus amis?”
(Quod tho Creseide) “is this a mans game,
What Troilus, woll ye do thus for shame?”

And therwithal her arm over him she laied,
And all foryave, and oftime him kest.
He thonked her, and to her spake and saied
As fell to purpose, for his hertes rest,
And she to that answerde him as her lest,
And with her goodly wordes him disport
She gan and oft his sorowes to comfort.

(Quod Pandarus) "For ought I can aspien,
This light nor I ne serven here of naught,
Light is nat good for sike folkes eyen,
But for the love of God, sens ye been brought
In this good plite, let now none hevy thought
Been hanged in the hertes of you twey,
And bare the candle to the chimney."

Soone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she soche othes as her list devise
Had of hem take, her thought tho no fere,
Ne cause eke none, to bid him thens rise:
Yet lesse thing than othes may suffice,
In many a case, for every wight I gesse,
That loveth well, meaneth but gentilnesse.

But in effect she would wete anon,
Of what man, and eke where, and also why
He jalous was, sens there was cause non:
And eke the signe that he toke it by,
She bade him that to tell her busily,
Or eles certain she bare him on honde,
That this was doen of malice her to fonde.

Withouten more, shortly for to sain
He must obey unto his ladies hest,
And for the lasse harme he must somewhat fain,
He saied her, whan she was at soche a fest,
She might on him have loked at the lest,
Not I nat what, all dere ynough a rishe,
As he that nedes must a cause out fish.

And she answerde, "Swete, all were it so
What harme was that, sens I non evill meane?
For by that God that bought us bothe two,
In all maner thing is mine entent cleane:

Soch arguments ne be nat worth a beane :
Woll ye the childist jalous counterfete,
Now were it worthy that ye were ybete."

Tho Troilus gan sorowfully to sike
Lest she be wroth, him thought his herte deide,
And saied, "Alas upon my sorowes sike,
Have mercy, O swete herte mine Creseide :
And if that in tho wordes that I seide,
Be any wrong, I woll no more trespase,
Doeth what you list, I am all in your grace."

And she answerde, "Of gilt misericorde,
That is to saine, that I foryeve all this,
And evermore on this night you recorde,
And bethe well ware ye do no more amis :"
"Nay, dere herte mine, no more" (quod he)
"ywis."

"And now" (quod she) "that I have you do smart,
Foryeve it to me, mine owne swete herte."

This Troilus with blisse of that surprised,
Put all in Goddes hand, as he that ment
Nothing but well, and sodainly avised
He her in his armes fast to him hent :
And Pandarus, with a full good entent,
Laied him to slepe, and saied, "If ye be wise,
Sweveneth not now, lest more folke arise."

What might or may the sely larke say,
Whan that the sparhauke hath him in his fote,
I can no more, but of these ilke tway,
(To whom this tale sugre be or sote)
Though I tary a yeere, sometime I mote,
After mine aucthour tellen hir gladnesse,
As well as I have tolde hir hevinesse.

Creseide, which that felt her thus ytake,
(As writen clerkes in hir bokes old)
Right as an aspen lefe she gan to quake,
Whan she him felt her in his armes fold :
But Troilus all hole of cares cold,
Gan thanken tho the blisfull goddes seven,
Through sondry pains to bring folk to Heven.

This Troilus in armes gan her straine,
And saied "Swete, as ever mote I gone,
Now be ye caught, here is but we twaine,
Now yeldeth you, for other boote is none :"
To that Creseide answerde thus anone,
"Ne had I er now, my swete herte dere,
Been yolde ywis, I were now not here."

O soth is saied, that healed for to be
As of a fever, or other great sicknesse,
Men must drinken, as we often se,
Full bitter drinke : and for to have gladnesse
Men drinken of pain, and great distresse :
I meane it here by, as for this aventure,
That through a pain hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth far more swete,
That bitternesse assaied was biforn,
For out of wo in blisse now they flete,
Non soch they felten sens they were borne,
Now is this bet, than both two be lorne :
For love of God, take every woman hede,
To werken thus, if it come to the nede.

Creseide all quite from every drede and tene,
As she that just cause had him to trist,
Made him soche feast, it joy was to sene,
Whan she his trouth and clene entent wist :

And as about a tree with many a twist
Bitrent and writhe the swete wodbinde,
Can eche of hem in armes other winde.

And as the newe abashed nightingale,
That stinteth first, whan she beginneth sing,
Whan that she heareth any heerdes tale,
Or in the hedges any wight stearing,
And after siker doeth her voice outring :
Right so Creseide, whan that her drede stent,
Opened her herte, and told him her entent.

And right as he that seeth his death yshapen,
And dien mote, in aught that he may gesse,
And sodainly rescuous doeth hem escapen,
And from his death is brought in sikernesse :
For all this world, in soche present gladnesse,
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete :
With worse hap God let us never mete.

Her armes smal, her streight backe and soft,
Her sides long, fleshy, smooth, and white,
He gan to stroke, and good thrift had full oft,
Her snowisse throte, her brestes round and lite :
Thus in this Heaven he gan him to delite,
And therewithall a thousand times her kist,
That what to doen for joy unneth he wist.

Than saied he thus, " O Love, O Charite,
Thy mother eke, Citheria the swete,
That after thy selfe, next heried be she
Venus I meane, the well willy planete :
And next that, Imeneus I thee grete,
For never man was to you goddes hold,
As I, which ye have brought fro cares cold.

“Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thingen,
Who so woll grace, and list thee not honouren,
Lo, his desire woll fly withouten wingen,
For n’oldest thou of bounte hem socouren
That serven best, and most alway labouren,
Yet were all lost, that dare I well sain certes,
But if thy grace passed our desertes.

“And for thou me, that lest thonke coud deserve
Of them that nombred been unto thy grace,
Hast holpen, there I likely was to sterve,
And me bestowed in so high a place,
That thilke boundes may no blisse surpace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thine excellence.”

And therwithall Creseide anon he kist,
Of whiche certain she felt no disease,
And thus saied he, “Now would God I wist,
Mine herte swete, how I you best might please :
What man” (quod he) “was ever thus at ease,
As I? On which the fairest, and the best
That ever I seie, deineth her to rest.

“Here may men seen that mercy passeth right,
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight,
But herte mine, of your benignite
So thinke, that though I unworthy be,
Yet mote I nede amenden in some wise,
Right through the vertue of your hie service.

“And for the love of God, my lady dere,
Sith he hath wrought me for I shal you serve,
As thus I meane : woll ye be my fere,
To do me live, if that you list, or sterve :

So teacheth me, how that I may deserve,
Your thonk, so that I through mine ignoraunce,
Ne doe nothing that you be displeasaunce.

“For certes, freshe and womanliche wife,
This dare I say, that trouth and diligence,
That shall ye finden in me all my life,
Ne I woll not certain broken your defence,
And if I doe, present or in absence,
For love of God, let slea me with the dede,
If that it like unto your womanhede.”

“Ywis” (quod she) “mine owne hertes lust,
My ground of ease, and al mine herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is all my trust:
But let us fall away fro this matere,
For it suffiseth, this that said is here,
And at o worde, without repentaunce,
Welcome my knight, my peace, my suffisaunce.”

Of hir delite or joies, one of the least
Were impossible to my wit to say,
But judgeth ye that have been at the feast
Of soche gladnesse, if that him list play:
I can no more but thus, these ilke tway,
That night betwixen drede and sikernesse,
Felten in love the greate worthinesse.

O blisfull night, of hem so long isought,
How blithe unto hem bothe two thou were?
Why ne had I soch feast with my soule ybought?
Ye, or but the least joy that was there?
Away thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And let him in this Heaven blisse dwell,
That is so high, that all ne can I tell.

But soth is, though I cannot tellen all,
As can mine aucthour of his excellence,
Yet have I saied, and God toforne shall,
In every thing all hooly his sentence :
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any worde in eched for the best,
Doeth therwithall right as your selven lest.

For my wordes here, and every part,
I speake hem all under correction
Of you that feling have in loves art,
And put it all in your discrecion,
To encrease or make diminicion
Of my language, and that I you beseech,
But now to purpose of my rather speech,

These ilke two that ben in armes laft,
So lothe to hem a sonder gon it were,
That eche from other wenden been biraft,
Or eles lo, this was her moste fere,
That all this thing but nice dreames were,
For which full oft eche of hem saied, " O swete,
Clepe I you thus, or els doe I it mete."

And lord so he gan goodly on her se,
That never his loke ne blent from her face,
And saied, " O my dere herte, may it be
That it be soth, that ye beene in this place ?"
" Ye herte mine, God thanke I of his grace."
(Quod tho Crescïde) and therwithall him kist,
That where her spirite was, for joy she n'ist.

This Troilus full often her eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and saied : " O eyen clere,
It weren ye that wrought me soche wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere :

Tho there be mercy written in your chere,
God wote the text full harde is for to find,
How coud ye withouten bonde me bind?"

Therwith he gan her fast in armes take,
And well an hundred times gan he sike,
Not such sorrowfull sighes as men make
For wo, or eles whan that folke be sike :
But easie sighes, soche as been to like,
That shewed his affection within,
Of soche maner sighes could he not blin.

Sone after this, they spake of sondry things
As fell to purpose of this aventure,
And plaiyng enterchaungeden hir rings,
Of which I can not tellen no scripture,
But well I wot, a broche of gold and azure,
In which a rubbie set was like an herte,
Creseide him yave, and stacke it on his sherte.

Lord, trowe ye that a coveitous wretch,
That blameth love, and halte of it dispite,
That of tho pens that he can muckre and ketch
Ever yet yave to him soche delite,
As is in love, in o poinct in some plite :
Nay doubtesse, for al so God me save
So parfite joie may no niggard have.

They woll say yes, but lord so they lie,
Tho busie wretches full of wo and drede,
That callen love a woodnesse of follie,
But it shall fall hem, as I shall you rede :
They shal forgon the white and eke the rede,
And live in wo, there God yeve hem mischaunce,
And every lover in his trouth avaunce.

As would God tho wretches that despise
Service of love had eares also long
As had Mida, full of covetise,
And thereto dronken had as hotte and strong
As Cresus did, for his affectes wronge
To teachen hem, that they been in the vice,
And lovers not, although they hold hem nice.

These ilke two, of whom that I you say,
Whan that hir hertes well assured were,
Tho gonnen they to speake and to play,
And eke rehearcen how, whan, and where
They knewe first, and every wo or fere
That passed was, but all such heavinesse,
I thonke it God, was tourned to gladnesse.

And evermore, whan that hem fell to speake
Of any thing of soche a time agone,
With kissing all that tale should breake,
And fallen into a new joy anone,
And didden all hir might, sens they were one
For to recoveren blisse, and been at ease,
And praised wo with joyes counterpaise.

Reason woll not that I speake of slepe,
For it accordeth not to my mattere,
God wote they toke of it full little kepe,
But lest this night that was to hem so dere
Ne should in vaine escape in no manere,
It was biset in joy and businesse,
Of all that souneth unto gentilnesse.

But whan the cock, commune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to beate, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the daies messenger,
Gan to rise, and out his beames throwe,

And estward rose, to him that could it know,
Fortuna maior, than anone Creseide
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seide :

“ Mine hertes life, my trust, all my pleasaunce,
That I was borne alas, that me is wo,
That day of us mote make disceveraunce,
For time it is to rise, and hence go,
Or eles I am lost for ever mo :
O night alas, why n’ilt thou over us hove,
As long as whan Alemena lay by Jove.

“ O blacke night, as folke in boke rede,
That shapen art by God, this world to hide
At certain times, with thy derke wede,
That under that men might in rest abide,
Wel oughten beasts to plain, and folke to chide
That there as day with labor would us brest
That thou thus flieth, and deinst us not rest.

“ Thou doest alas, to shortly thine office,
Thou racle night, there God maker of kinde,
Thee for thine hast, and thine unkind vice,
So fast aie to our hemisperie binde,
That nevermore under the ground thou wind,
For now for thou so highest out of Troie,
Have I forgone thus hastely my joie.”

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felt,
As thought him tho, for pitous distresse
The bloodie teares from his herte melt,
As he that yet never soche hevinesse,
Assaied had, out of so great gladnesse,
Gan therewith all Creseide his lady dere
In armes strain, and hold in lovely manere.

O cruell day, accuser of the joy
That night and love have stole, and fast ywrien,
Accursed be thy coming into Troie,
For every bowre hath one of thy bright eyen :
Envious day, what list thee so to spien,
What hast thou lost, why seekest thou this place?
There God thy light so quench for his grace.

“ Alas, what have these lovers thee agilt ?
Dispitous day, thine be the paine of Hell,
For many a lover hast thou slain, and wilt,
Thy poring in woll no where let hem dwell :
What profrest thou thy light here for to sell ?
Go sell it hem that smale seales grave,
We woll thee not, us nedeth no day have.”

And eke the sonne Titan gan he chide,
And said, “ O foole, well may men thee dispise,
Thou hast all night the dawning by thy side,
And sufferest her so sone up fro thee rise,
For to disease us lovers in this wise :
What hold your bed there, thou and thy morow,
I bid God so yeve you bothe sorow.”

Therwith ful sore he sighed, and thus he seide
“ My lady right, and of my weale or wo
The well and roote, O goodly mine Creseide,
And shall I rise alas, and shall I so ?
Now fele I that mine herte mote a two ;
And how should I my life an houre save,
Sens that with you is all the life I have ?

“ What shall I doen ? For certes I n’ot how
Ne whan alas, I shall the time see
That in this plite I may been eft with you,
And of my life God wote how shall that be,

Sens that desire right now so biteth me,
That I am dedde anon, but I retourne,
How should I long alas, fro you sojourne?

“But nathelesse, mine owne lady bright,
Were it so that I wist utterly,
That your humble servaunt and your knight
Were in your herte yset so fermely,
As ye in mine: the which truely
Me leaver were than these worlds twaine,
Yet should I bet endure all my paine.”

To that Creseide answerde right anon,
And with a sigh she saied, “O herte dere,
The game ywis so ferforth now is gon,
The first shal Phebus fallen from the sphere,
And everiche egle been the doves fere,
And every rocke out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus go out of Crescides herte.

“Ye been so depe within mine herte grave,
That tho I would it turn out of my thought,
As wisely veray God my soule save,
To dien in the pain, I could nought:
And for the love of God, that us hath wrought,
Let in your brain none other fantasie
So crepen, that it cause me to die.

“And that ye me would have as fast in mind,
As I have you, that would I you beseeche:
And if I wist sothly that to find
God might not apoint my joies to ech.
But herte mine, withouten more spech,
Bethe to me true, or eles were it routh,
For I am thine, by God and by my trouth.

“Bethe glad forthy, and live in sikernesse,
Thus saied I never er this, ne shall to mo,
And if to you it were a great gladnesse,
To tourne ayen sone after that ye go,
As faine would I as ye, it were so,
As wisely God mine herte bring to restc :”
And him in armes toke, and ofte keste.

Ayenst his will, sithe it mote nedes bee,
This Troilus up rose and fast him cled,
And in his armes toke his ladie free,
An hundred times, and on his way him sped,
And with soche wordes, as his herte bled,
He saied : “Fare well my dere herte swete,
That God us graunt sound and sone to mete.”

To which no word for sorow she answerd,
So sore gan his parting her distrain,
And Troilus unto his paleis ferd,
As wo begon as she was soth to sain,
So hard him wrong of sharp desire the pain,
For to been eftre there he was in pleasaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.

Retourned to his roiall paleis sone,
He soft unto his bedde gan for to sinke
To slepe long, as he was wont to doen,
But all for naught, he may well ligge and winke,
But slepe may there none in his herte sinke,
Thinking how she, for whom desire him brend,
A thousand folde was worth more than he wend.

And in his thought, gan up and down to wind
Her wordes all, and every countenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his mind
The lest pointe that to him was pleasaunce,

And verely of thilke remembraunce,
Desire al newe him brende, and lust to brede,
Gan more than erst, and yet toke he none hede.

Creseide also, right in the same wise,
Of Troilus gan in her herte shet
His worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wise,
His gentilnesse, and how she with him met :
Thonking love, he so well her beset,
Desiring oft to have her herte dere,
In soche a place as she durst make him chere.

Pandare a morow, which that comen was
Unto his nece, gan her faire to grete,
And saied, "All this night so rained it alas,
That all my drede is, that ye, nece swete,
Have little leiser had to slepe and mete :
Al this night"(quod he)"hath rain sodome wake,
That some of us I trowe hir heddes ake."

And nere he came and said, "How stant it now
This merie morow, nece, how can ye fare?"
Creseide answerde, "Never the bet for you,
Foxe that ye been, God yeve your herte care,
God helpe me so, ye caused all this fare,
Trowe I,"(quod she)"for all your wordes white,
O who so seeth you, knoweth you full lite."

With that she gan her face for to wrie,
With the shete, and woxe for shame all redde,
And Pandarus gan under for to prie,
And saied "Nece, if that I shall been dedde,
Have here a sword, and smiteth of my hedde :"
With that his arme all sodainly he thrist
Under her necke, and at the last her kist.

I passe all that, which chargeth naught to say,
What, God foryave his death, and she also
Foryave: and with her uncle gan to play,
For other cause was there none than so:
But of this thing right to the effect to go,
Whan time was, home to her house she went,
And Pandarus hath fully his entent.

Now tourne we ayen to Troilus,
That restelesse full long a bedde lay,
And prively sent after Pandarus,
To him to come in all the hast he may,
He come anon, not ones saied he nay,
And Troilus full soberly he grete,
And doune upon the beddes sides him sete.

This Troilus with all thaffectioun
Of friendly love, that herte may devise,
To Pandarus on his knees fill adoun:
And er that he would of the place arise,
He gan him thanken on his beste wise,
An hundred time he gan the time blesse,
That he was born, to bring him fro distresse.

He said, "O frend of friends, the alderbest
That ever was, the sothe for to tell,
Thou hast in Heaven ybrought my soul at rest,
Fro Phlegeton the fire flood of Hell,
That though I might a thousand times sell
Upon a day my life in thy service,
It might not a mote in that suffice.

"The Sonne, which that all the world may se,
Sawe never yet, my life that dare I leie,
So joly, faire, and goodly, as is she
Whose I am all, and shall till that I deie,

And that I thus am hers, dare I seie,
That thanked be the high worthinesse
Of love, and eke thy kinde businesse.

“Thus hast thou me no little thing iyeve,
For why to thee obliged be for aie,
My life, and why? for through thine helpe I live,
Or els dedde had I been ago many a day :”
And with that worde down in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus full soberly him herde,
Till all was said, and than he him answerde.

“My dere frende, if I have doen for thee,
In any case, God wote it is me lefe,
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God helpe me so, but take now not agrife,
That I shall saine, beware of this mischiefe,
That ther as now thou broght art to thy blis,
That thou thy selfe ne cause it not to mis.

“For of fortunes sharpe adversite,
The worst kind of infortune is this,
A man that hath been in prosperite,
And it remember, whan it passed is.
Thou art wise inough, forthy, doe not amis,
Be not to rakell, though thou sit warme,
For if thou be, certain it woll thee harme.

“Thou art at ease, and hold thee well therin,
For al so sure as redde is every fire,
As great a crafte is to kepe well as win,
Bridle alway well thy speach and thy desire,
For worldly joy holdeth not by a wire,
That preveth well, it brest alday so ofte,
Forthy neede is to werken with it softe.”

(Quod Troilus) "I hope, and God to forne,
My dere frende, that I shall so me bere,
That in my gift there shall nothing been lorne,
Ne I nill not rakle, as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matter often tere,
For wistest thou mine herte wel Pandare,
God wote of this thou wouldest lite care."

Tho gan he tell him of his glad night,
And whereof first his herte dradde, and how,
And saied "Frende, as I am true knight,
And by that faith I owe to God and you,
I had it never halfe so hote as now,
And aie the more that desire me biteth
To love her best, the more it me deliteth.

"I n'ot my selfe not wisely, what it is,
But now I feele a new qualite,
Ye all another than I did er this :"
Pandare answerd and saied thus, "that he
That ones may in Heaven blisse be,
He feeleth other waies dare I lay,
Than thilke time he first heard of it say."

This is a worde for all, that Troilus
Was never ful to speke of this matere,
And for to praisen unto Pandarus
The bounte of his right lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke, and maken chere,
This tale was aie span newe to begin,
Til that the tale departed hem a twinne.

Soone after this, for that fortune it would,
Yemen was the blisfull time swete,
That Troilus was warned, that he should,
There he was erst, Creseide his lady mete :

For which he felt his herte in joy flete,
And faithfully gan all the goodes hery,
And let see now, if that he can be mery,

And holden was the forme, and al the gise
Of her comming, and of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devise,
But plainly to theeffect right for to go :
In joy and surete Pandarus hem two
Abedde brought, whan hem both lest,
And thus they ben in quiet and in rest.

Naught nedeth it to you sith they ben met
To aske at me, if that they blithe were,
For if it erst was well, tho was it bet
A thousand folde, this nedeth not enquire :
A go was every sorow and every fere,
And both ywis they had, and so they wend,
As much joy as herte may comprehend.

This n'is na litel thing of for to sey,
This passeth every wit for to devise,
For eche of hem gan others lust obey,
Felicite, which that these clerkes wise
Commenden so, ne may no here suffise,
This joy ne may not ywritten be with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bethinke.

But cruel day, so welaway the stound,
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knew,
For which hem thought felen dethes wound,
So wo was hem, that chaungen gan hir hew
And day they gonnen to dispise al new,
Calling it traitour, envious and worse,
And bitterly the daies light they corse.

(Quod Troilus) “Alas, now am I ware
That Pirous, and tho swifte stedes thre,
Which that drawen forth the Sunnes chare,
Han gon some by pathe in dispite of me,
And maketh it so sone day to be,
And for the Sunne him hasten thus to rise,
Ne shall I never don him sacrifice.

But nedes day departe hem must sone,
And whan hir speech done was, and hir chere,
They twin anon, as they were wont to done,
And setten time of meting eft yfere :
And many a night they wrought in this manere :
And thus fortune a time ladde in joie
Creseide, and eke this kinges son of Troie.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singings,
This Troilus gan all his life to lede,
He spendeth, justeth, and maketh feestings,
He geveth frely oft, and chaungeth wede,
He helde about him alway out of drede
A world of folke, as come him well of kind,
The freshest and the best he coulde find.

That such a voice was of him, and a steven,
Throughout the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up ronge unto the yate of Heven,
And as in love he was in such gladnesse,
That in his herte he demed, as I gesse,
That there n'is lover in this world at ease,
So wel as he, and thus gan love him please.

The goodlihede or beaute, which the kind,
In any other lady had ysette,
Can not the mountenaunce of a gnat unbind,
About his herte, of al Creseides nette :

He was so narowe ymasked, and yknette,
That is undon in any maner side,
That n'il nat ben, for ought that may betide.

And by the hond full ofte he would take
This Pandarus, and into gardin lede,
And such a feest, and such a processe make
Him of Creseide, and of her womanhede,
And of her beaute, that withouten drede,
It was an Heven his wordes for to here,
And than he woulde sing in this manere :

“ Love, that of erth and sea hath governaunce,
Love, that his heestes hath in Heven hie,
Love, that with an holosome aliaunce
Halte people joyned, as him list hem gie,
Love, that knitteth law and companie,
And couples doth in vertue for to dwell,
Binde this accord, that I have told and tell.

“ That, that the world with faith, which that is
Diverseth so his staundes according, [stable,
That elements that bethe discordable,
Holden a bonde, perpetually during,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bring,
And that the Mone hath lordship over the nights,
Al this doeth Love, aie heried be his mights.

“ That, that the sea, that greedy is to flowen,
Constraineth to a certaine ende so
His floodes, that so fiercely they ne growen
To drenchen earth and all for evermo,
And if that Love aught let his bridle go,
All that now loveth asunder should lepe,
And lost were all, that Love halt now to hepe.

“ So would to God, that authour is of kind,
That with his bond, Love of his vertue list
To searchen hertes all, and fast bind,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wist,
And hertes cold, hem would I that hem twist,
To maken hem love, and that list hem aie rew
On hertes sore, and keep hem that ben trew.”

In all needes for the townes werre
He was, and aye the first in armes dight,
And certainly, but if that bookes erre,
Save Hector, most ydradde of any wight,
And this encrease of hardinesse and might
Come him of love, his ladies thanke to win,
That altered his spirit so within.

In time of truce on hauking would he ride,
Or els hunt bore, beare, or lioun,
The small beastes let he gon beside,
And whan that he come riding into the toun,
Full oft his lady from her window doun,
As fresh as faucon, comen out of mue,
Full redely was him goodly to salue.

And most of love and vertue was his speech,
And in dispite had all wretchednesse,
And doubtlesse no need was him beseech
To honouren hem that had worthinesse,
And easen hem that weren in distresse,
And glad was he, if any wight well ferde
That lover was, whan he it wist or herde.

For sooth to saine, he lost held every wight,
But if he were in Loves high servise,
I meane folke that aught it ben of right,
And over all this, so well could he devise

Of sentement, and in so uncouth wise
All his array, that every lover thought,
That al was wel, what so he said or wrought.

And though that he be come of blood roiall,
Him list of pride at no wight for to chace,
Benigne he was to ech in generall,
For which he gate him thank in every place :
Thus wolde Love, yheried by his grace,
That pride, and ire, envie, and avarice,
He gan to flie, and every other vice.

Thou lady bright, the doughter of Diane,
Thy blind and winged son eke dan Cupide,
Ye sustren nine eke, that by Helicone
In hill Pernaso, listen for to abide,
That ye thus ferre han deined me to gide,
I can no more, but sens that ye woll wend,
Ye heried ben for aye withouten end.

Through you have I said fully in my song
Theffect and joy of Troilus servise,
All be that there was some disease among,
As mine authour listeth to devise,
My thirde booke now end I in this wise,
And Troilus in lust and in quiete,
Is with Creseide his owne herte swete.

EXPLICIT LIBER TERTIUS.

BUT all too little, welaway the while
Lasteth such joy, ythonked bee Fortune,
That seemeth truest, whan she woll begile,
And can to fooles her songe entune,
That she hem hent, that bleut, traitor commune :
And whan a wight is from her whele ythrow,
Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

From Troilus she gan her bright face
Away to writhe, and tooke of him none hede,
And cast him clene out of his ladies grace,
And on her whele she set up Diomede,
For which mine herte right now ginneth blede,
And now my pen alas, with which I write,
Quaketh for drede of that I must endite.

For how Creseide Troilus forsooke,
Or at the least, how that she was unkind,
Mote henceforth ben matter of my booke,
As witen folk through which it is in mind,
Alas, that they should ever cause find
To speake her harme, and if they on her lie,
Ywis hemselfe should have the villanie.

O ye Herines, nightes doughters three,
That endelesse complaine ever in paine,
Megera, Alecto, and eke Tesiphonee,
Thou cruell Mars eke, father of Quirine,
This ilke fourth booke helpe me to fine,
So that the loos, and love, and life yfere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

INCIPIT LIBER QUARTUS.

LIGGING in host, as I have said ere this,
The Greekes strong, about Troy toun,
Befell, that whan that Phebus shining is
Upon the breast of Hercules Lion,
That Hector, with many a bold baron,
Cast on a day with Greekes for to fight,
As he was wont, to greve hem what he might.

Not I how long or short it was bitwene
This purpose, and that day they fighten ment,
But on a day well armed bright and shene,
Hector and many a worship knight out went

With speare in honde, and big bowes bent,
And in the berde withouten lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the field anone hem mette.

The longe day with speares sharpe yground
With arrows, dartes, swerds, and maces fell,
They fight, and bringen horse and man to ground,
And with hir axes out the braines quell,
But in the last shoure, sooth to tell,
The folke of Troy hem selven so misleden,
That with the worse at night home they fleden.

At whiche day was taken Anthenor,
Maugre Polimidas, or Monesteo,
Xantippe, Sarpedon, Palestinor,
Polite, or eke the Troyan dan Rupheo,
And other lasse folke, as Phebuseo,
So that for harm that day the folk of Troy
Dreden to lese a great part of hir joy.

Of Priamus was yeve at Grekes request
A time of truce, and tho they gonnen trete
Hir prisoners to chaungen most and lest,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete,
This thing anon was couth in every strete,
Both in th'assiege, in toune, and every where,
And with the first it came to Calcas ere.

Whan Calcas knew this tretise should hold
In consistorie among the Greekes soone
He gan in thringe, forth with lordes old,
And set him there as he was wont to done,
And with a chaunged face hem bade a boone
For love of God, to done that reverence,
To stinten noise, and yeve him audience.

Than said he thus, "Lo lordes mine I was
Troyan, as it is knowen out of drede,
And if that you remember, I am Calcas,
That alderfirst yave comfort to your nede,
And tolde well howe that you should spede,
For dredelesse through you shall in a stound
Ben Troy ybrent, and beaten doun to ground.

"And in what forme, or in what manner wise
This toun to shend, and all your lust atcheve,
Ye have ere this well herde me devise :
This know ye my lordes, as I leve,
And for the Greekes weren me so leve,
I came my selfe in my proper persone
To teach in this how you was best to done.

"Having unto my treasour, ne my rent,
Right no regard in respect of your ease,
Thus all my good I left, and to you went,
Wening in this you lordes for to please,
But all that losse ne doth me no disease,
I vouchsafe, as wisely have I joy,
For you to lese all that I have in Troy.

"Save of a doughter that I left, alas,
Sleeping at home, whan out of Troy I stert,
O sterne, O cruell father that I was,
How might I have in that so hard an herte ?
Alas that I ne had brought her in my shert,
For sorow of which I wol nat live to morow,
But if ye lordes rew upon my sorow.

"For because that I saw no time ere now
Her to deliver, iche holden have my pees,
But now or never, if that it like you,
I may her have right now doubtles :

O helpe and grace, among all this prees,
Rew on this old caitife in distresse,
Sith I through you have all this hevinesse.

“Ye have now caught, and fettred in prison
Troyans enow, and if your willes be,
My child with one may have redemption,
Now for the love of God, and of bounte,
One of so fele alas, so yefe him me :
What need were it this praier for to werne,
Sith ye shull have both folk and toun as yerne.

“On perill of my life I shall nat lie,
Apollo hath me told full faithfully,
I have eke found by astronomie,
By sort, and by augurie truely,
And dare well say the time is fast by,
That fire and flambe on all the toun shall sprede,
And thus shall Troy turne to ashen dede.

“For certaine, Phebus and Neptunus both,
That makeden the walles of the toun,
Ben with the folke of Troy alway so wroth,
That they woll bring it to confusioun
Right in despite of king Laomedoun,
Because he nolde paien hem hir hire,
The toun of Troy shall ben set on fire.”

Telling his tale alway this olde grey,
Humble in his speech and looking eke,
The salte teares from his eyen twey,
Full faste ronnen doune by either cheke,
So long he gan of succour hem beseke,
That for to heale him of his sorowes sore,
They gave him Antenor withouten more.

But who was glad enough, but Calcas tho,
And of this thing full soone his nedes leide
On hem that shoulde for the treatise go
And hem for Antenor full ofte preide,
To bringen home king Thoas and Creseide,
And whan Priam his safegarde sent,
Th'embassadours to Troy streight they went.

The cause I told of hir comming, the old
Priam the king, full soone in generall,
Let here upon his parliment hold,
Of which th'effect rehearsen you I shall:
Th'embassadours ben answerde for finall,
The eschaunge of prisoners, and all this nede
Hem liketh well, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
When asked was for Antenor Creseide,
For which full sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes well nigh deide,
But nathelesse he no word to it seide,
Lest men should his affection espie,
With mannes herte he gan his sorowes drie.

And full of anguish and of gresly drede,
Abode what other lords would to it sey,
And if they would graunt, as God forbede,
Th'eschange of her, than thought he thinges twey:
First, how to save her honour, and what wey
He might best th'eschaunge of her withstond,
Full fast he cast how all this might stond.

Love him made all prest to done her bide,
And rather dien than she should go,
But Reason said him on that other side,
“ Withouten assent of her do nat so,

Lest for thy werke she would be thy fo,
And saine, that through thy medling is yblow
Your brother love, there it was not erst know."

For which he gan deliberen for the best,
And though the lordes would that she went,
He would let hem graunt what hem lest,
And tell his lady first what that they ment,
And whan that she had said him her entent,
Thereafter would he worken also blive,
Tho all the world ayen it wolde strive.

Hector, which that well the Greekes herd,
For Antenor how they would have Creseide,
Can it withstond, and soberly answerd :
"Sirs, she n'is no prisoner," (he seide)
"I n'ot on you who that this charge leide,
But on my part, ye may eftsoones hem tell,
We usen here no women for to sell."

The noise of people up stert than atones,
As brimme as blase of straw yset on fire,
For infortune it would for the nones,
They shouliden hir confusion desire : [spire
"Hector," (quod they) "what ghost may you en-
This woman thus to shild, and done us lese
Dan Antenore, a wrong way now ye chese.

"That is so wise, and eke so bold baroun,
And we have need of folke, as men may see,
He is one of the greatest of this toun :
O Hector, lette, thy fantasies bee,
O king Priam," (quod they) "thus segge wee,
That all our voice is to forgone Creseide,"
And to deliver Antenor they preide.

O Juvenall lord, true is thy sentence,
That little wenen folke what is to yerne,
That they ne finden in hir desire offence,
For cloud of errour ne lette hem discernen
What best is, and lo, here ensample as yerne :
These folke desiren now deliverance
Of Antenor, that brought hem to mischaunce.

For he was after traitour to the toun
Of Troy alas, they quitte him out to rathe,
O nice world, so thy discretioun,
Creseide, which that never did hem scathe,
Shall now no lenger in her blisse bathe,
But Antenor, he shall come home to toun,
And she shall out, thus said heere and houn.

For which delibered was by parliment,
For Antenor to yeelden out Creseide,
And it pronouced by the president,
Though that Hector nay full oft praid,
And finally, what wight that it withsaid,
It was for naught, it must ben, and should,
For substaunce of the parliment it would.

Departed out of the parliment echone,
This Troilus, without wordes mo,
Unto his chamber spedde him fast alone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The which he bad out faste for to go,
Because he would slepen, as he said,
And hastely upon his bedde him laid.

And as in winter, leaves ben biraft
Ech after other, till trees be bare,
So that there n'is but barke and branch ylaft,
Lithe Troilus, biraft of ech welfare,

Ybounden in the blacke barke of care,
Disposed wode out of his witte to breide,
So sore him sate the chaunging of Creseide.

He rist him up, and every dore he shette,
And window eke, and tho this sorrowfull man
Upon his beddes side doune him sette,
Full like a dead image, pale and wan,
And in his breast the heaped wo began
Out brust, and he to worken in this wise
In his woodnesse, as I shall you devise.

Right as the wilde bull beginneth spring
Now here, now there, idarted to the herte,
And of his death roreth, in complaining,
Right so gan he about the chamber stert,
Smiting his breast aye with his fistes smert,
His head to the wall, his body to the ground,
Full oft he swapt, himselven to confound.

His eyen two for pity of his herte
Out stremeden as swift as welles twey,
The highe sobbes of his sorrowes smert
His speech him reft, unnethes might he sey,
“O death alas, why n’ilt thou do me dey?
Accursed be that day which that nature
Shope me to ben a lives creature.”

But after whan the fury and all the rage
Which that his heart twist, and fast threst,
By length of time somewhat gan assuage,
Upon his bed he laid him down to rest,
But tho begon his teares more out to brest,
That wonder is the body may suffise
To halfe this wo, which that I you devise.

Than said he thus : “ Fortune alas the while
What have I done ? what have I thee agilt ?
How mightest thou for routhe me begile ?
Is there no grace ? and shall I thus be spilt ?
Shall thus Creseide away for that thou wilt ?
Alas, how mightest thou in thine herte find
To ben to me thus cruell and unkind ?

“ Have I thee nat honoured all my live,
As thou well wotest, above the Gods all ?
Why wilt thou me fro joy thus deprive ?
O Troilus, what may men now thee call,
But wretch of wretches, out of honour fall
Into misery, in which I woll bewaile
Creseide alas, till that the breath me faile.

“ Alas Fortune, if that my life injoy
Displeased had unto thy foule envie,
Why ne haddest thou my father king of Troy
Biraft the life, or done my brethren die,
Or slaine my selfe, that thus complaine and crie ?
I combre world, that may of nothing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve.

“ If that Creseide alone were me laft,
Naught raught I whider thou woldest me stere,
And her alas, than hast thou me byraft :
But evermore, lo this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gierfull violence :
Thus am I lost, there helpeth no defence.

“ O very Lord, O Love, O God alas,
That knowest best mine herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorowfull life done in this caas,
If I forgo that I so dere have bought,

Sens ye Creseide and me have fully brought
Into your grace, and both our hertes sealed,
How may ye suffer alas it be repealed?

“What I may done, I shal while I may dure
On live, in turment and in cruell paine,
This infortune, or this disaventure,
Alone as I was borne I woll complaine,
Ne never woll I seene it shine or raine,
But end I woll as Edippe in derkenesse
My sorrowfull life, and dien in distresse.

“O wery ghost, that errest to and fro,
Why nilt thou flien out of the wofullest
Body, that ever might on grounde go?
O soule, lurking in this wofull neste,
Fly forthout mine herte, and let it breste,
And follow alway Creseide thy lady dere,
Thy right place is now no lenger here.

“O wofull cien two, sens your disport
Was all to seene Creseides eyen bright,
What shall ye done, but for my discomfort
Stoden for naught, and wepen out your sight,
Sens she is queint, that wont was you to light,
In veine from this forth have I eyen twey
Yformed, sens your vertue is away.

“O my Creseide, O lady souveraine
Of this wofull soule that thus crieth,
Who shall now yeven comfort to thy paine?
Alas, no wight, but whau mine herte dieth,
My spirit, which that so unto you hieth,
Receive in gree, for that shall aye you serve,
Forthy no force is, though the body sterve.

“ O ye lovers, that high upon the whele
Ben sette of Fortune in good aventure,
God lene that ye finded aye love of stele,
And long mote your life in joy endure,
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your fellow resteth there,
For I loved eke, though I unworthy were.

“ O old unholosome and mislived man,
Calcas I meane, alas what eiled thee
To ben a Greek, sens thou art borne Trojan ?
O Calcas, which that wolt my haue be,
In cursed time was thou borne for me,
As would blissfull Jove for his joy,
That I thee had where I would in Troy.”

A thousand sighes hotter than the glede,
Out of his breast, each after other went,
Medled with plaint new, his wo to fede,
For which his wofull teares never stent,
And shortly so his sorowes him to rent,
And woxe so mate, that joy or pennaunce
He feeleth none, but lieth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parliment
Had heard what every lord and burgess seid,
And how full graunted was by one assent,
For Antenor to yelden out Crescid :
Gan well nigh wood out of his wit to breid,
So that for wo he niste what he ment,
But in a rage to Troilus he went.

A certaine knight, that for the time kept
The chamber dore, undid it him anone,
And Pandare, that full tenderly wept,
Into the derke chamber as still as stone,

Toward the bedde gan softly to gone,
So confuse, that he n'ist what to say,
For very wo, his wit was nigh away.

And with chere and looking all to torne,
For sorow of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this wofull Troilus beforne,
And on his pitous face he gan beholden,
But so oft gan his herte colden,
Seeing his friend in wo, whose heavinesse
His herte slough, as thought him for distresse.

This wofull wight, this Troilus that felt
His friend Pandare ycomen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayenst the Sunne melt,
For which this wofull Pandare of pite
Gan for to weepe as tenderly as he:
And speechlesse thus ben these ilke twey,
That neither might for sorow o word sey.

But at the last, this wofull Troilus,
Nigh dead for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorrowfull noise he said thus
Among his sobbes and his sighes sore,
“ Lo Pandare I am dead withouten more,
Hast thou not heard at parliament,” he seide,
“ For Antenor how lost is my Crescide?”

This Pandare full dead and pale of hew,
Full pitously answerde, and said, “ Yes,
As wisely were it false as it is trew,
That I have heard, and wote all how it is,
O mercy God, who would have trowed this,
Who would have wend, that in so little a throw
Fortune our joy would have overthrow.

“ For in this world there is no creature,
As to my dome, that ever saw ruine
Straunger than this, through case or aventure,
But who may all eschue or all devine,
Such is this world, forthy I thus define :
Ne trust no wight to find in Fortune
Aye property, her yestes ben commune.

“ But tell me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorrowen thus, why list thou in this wise,
Sens thy desire all holy hast thou had,
So that by right it ought inough suffise,
But I that never felt in my servise
A friendly chere or looking of an eie,
Let me thus wepe and wailen till I die.

“ And over al this, as thou wel wost thy selve,
This toune is full of ladies all about,
And to my dome, fairer than such twelve
As ever she was, shal I finden in some rout,
Ye one or twey, withouten any dout :
Forthy be glade mine owne dere brother,
If she be lost, we shall recover another.

“ What God forbid alway that ech pleasaunce
In o thing were, and in none other wight,
If one can sing, another can well daunce,
If this be goodly, she is glad and light,
And this is faire, and that can good aright,
Ech for his vertue holden is for dere,
Both heroner and faucon for rivere.

“ And eke as writ Zansis, that was full wise,
The new love out chaseth oft the old :
And upon new case lieth new avise,
Thinke eke thy selfe to saven art thou hold,

Such fire by processe shall of kind cold,
For sens it is but casuell pleasaunce,
Some case shall put it out of remembraunce.

“ For also sure as day commeth after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or eles selde seeing of a wight,
Done old affections all overgo,
And for thy part, thou shalt have one of tho
To abredge with thy bitter paines smart,
Absence of her shall drive her out of herte.”

These wordes saied he for the nones all
To helpe his friend, least he for sorow deide,
For doubtlesse to doen his wo to fall,
He raught nat what unthrift that he seide :
But Troilus that nigh for sorrow deide,
Tooke little hede of all that ever he ment,
One eare it heard, at the other out it went.

But at the last he answerd, and said, “ Friend,
“ This lechcraft, or healed thus to be,
Were well fitting, if that I were a fiend,
To traïen a wight, that true is unto me,
I pray God let this counsaile never ythe,
But doe me rather sterve anon right here,
Ere thus I doen, as thou me wouldest lere.

“ She that I serve ywis, what so thou sey,
To whom mine herte enhabite is by right,
Shall have me holy hers, till that I dey,
For Pandarus, sens I have trouth her hight,
I woll nat ben untrue for no wight,
But as her man I woll aye live and sterve,
And never none other creature serve.

“ And there thou saiest thou shalt as fair find
As she, let be, make no comparison,
To creature yformed here by kind,
O leve Pandare, in conclusion,
I woll nat been of thine opinion
Touching all this, for which I thee besecch,
So hold thy peace, thou sleest me with thy speech.

“ Thou biddest me I should love another
All freshly new, and let Crescide go,
It lithe nat in my power, leve brother,
And though I might, yet would I nat do so,
But canst thou plaien raket to and fro,
Nettle in dock out, now this, now that, Pandare ?
Now foule fall her for thy wo that care.

“ Thou farest eke by me Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bigon,
He commeth to him apace, and saith right thus,
‘ Thinke not on smart, and thou shalt feele none,’
Thou maiest me first transmewen in a stone,
And reve me my passions all,
Or thou so lightly doe my wo to fall.

“ The death may well out of my brest depart
The life, so long may this sorow mine :
But fro my soule shall Crescides dart
Out nevermore, but doune with Proserpine
Whan I am dead, I woll won in pine,
And there I woll eternally complain
My wo, and how that twinned be we twain.

“ Thou hast here made an argument full fine,
How that it should lasse paine be
Crescide to forgone, for she was mine,
And lived in ease and in felicite :

Why gabbest thou, that saidest unto me,
That him is wors that is fro wele ithrow,
Than he had erst none of that wele know ?

“ But tel me now, sen that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love aye to and fro,
Why hast thou nat doen busily thy might
To chaungen her, that doth thee all thy wo ?
Why nilt thou let her fro thine herte go ?
Why nilt thou love another lady swete,
That may thine herte setten in quiete ?

“ If thou hast had in love aye yet mischance,
And canst it not out of thine herte drive,
I that lived in lust and in pleasance
With her, as much as creature on live,
How would I that foryet, and that so blive ?
O where hast thou ben hid so long in mew,
Thou canst so well and formeliche argew.

“ Nay God wot, naught worth is al thy rede,
For which, for what that ever may befall,
Withouten wordes mo I woll ben dede :
O Death, that ender art of sorrowes all,
Come now, sens I so oft after thee call,
For sely is that death, sooth for to saine,
That oft ycleped, commeth and endeth paine.

“ Well wote I, while my life was in quiete.
Ere thou me sluc, I would have yeven hire,
But now thy comming is to me so swete,
That in this world I nothing so desire :
O Death, sens with this sorow I am a fire,
Thou either do me anone in teares drench,
Or with thy cold stroke mine herte quench.

“ Sens that thou slaiest so fele in sundry wise
Ayenst hir will, unpraied day and night,
Doe me at my request this servise,
Deliver now the world, so doest thou right,
Of me that am the wofullest wight
That ever was, for time is that I sterve,
Sens in this world of right naught do I serve.”

This Troilus in teares gan distill
As licour out of allambike full fast,
And Pandarus gan hold his tongue still,
And to the ground his eyen downe he cast,
But nathelesse, thus thought he at last,
“ What parde, rather than my fellow dey,
Yet shall I somewhat more unto him sey.”

And said, “ Friend, sens thou hast such distresse,
And sens thee list mine argumentes blame,
Why n’ilt thy selven helpe doen redresse,
And with thy manhood letten all this game,
Go ravish her, ne canst thou not for shame ?
And either let her out of tounne fare,
Or hold her still, and leave thy nice fare.

“ Art thou in Troy, and hast non hardiment
To take a wight, whiche that loveth thee,
And would her selven been of thine assent,
Now is nat this a nice vanite ?
Rise up anon, and let this weeping be,
And sith thou art a man, for in this hour
I woll been dead, or she shall ben our.”

To this answerde him Troilus full soft,
And saied, “ Ywis, my leve brother dere,
All this have I my selfe yet thought full oft,
And more thing than thou devisest here,

But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here,
And whan thou hast me yeven audience,
Thereafter mayst thou tell all thy sentence.

First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravishing of women so by might,
It should not been suffred me to erre,
As it stont now, ne done so great unright,
I should have also blame of every wight,
My fathers graunt if that I so withstood,
Sens she is chaunged for the tounes good.

“ I have eke thought, so it were her assent,
To aske her of my father of his grace,
Than thinke I, this were her accusation,
Sens well I wot I may her nat purchase,
For sens my father in so high a place
As parliment, hath her eschaunge ensealed,
He n’ill for me his letter be repealed.

“ Yet drede I most her herte to perturbe
With violence, if I doe such a game,
For if I would it openly disturbe,
It must be disclaunder to her name,
And me were lever die than her diffame,
As n’old God, but I should have
Her honour, lever than my life to save.

“ Thus am I lost, for aught that I can see,
For certaine is that I am her knight,
I must her honour lever have than me
In every case, as lover ought of right,
Thus am I with desire and reason twight :
Desire for to disturben her me redeth,
And reason n’ill not, so mine herte dredeth.”

Thus weeping, that he could never cease,
He said, " Alas, how shall I wretche fare,
For well fele I alway my love encrease,
And hope is lasse and lasse Pandare,
Encreasen eke the causes of my care,
So welaway, why n'ill mine herte brest,
For as in love there is but little rest."

Pandare answerde, " Friend thou mayst for me
Done as thee list, but had I it so hote,
And thine estate, she should go with me,
Tho all this toun cried on this thing by note,
I n'old set at all that noise a grote,
For whan men have cried, than wol they roun,
Eke wouder last but nine deies never in toun.

" Devine not in reason aye so deepe,
Ne curtesly, but helpe thy selfe anone,
Bet is that other than thy selven wepe,
And namely, sens ye two ben al one,
Rise up, for by mine head she shall not gone,
And rather ben in blame a little yfound,
Than sterve here as a gnat withouten wound.

" It is no shame unto you, ne no vice,
Her to withholden, that ye loveth most,
Peraventure she might hold thee for nice,
To letten her go thus unto the Grekes hoste,
Think eke Fortune, as well thy selven woste,
Helpeth hardie man unto his emprise,
And weiveth wretches for hir cowardise.

" And though thy lady would alite her greve,
Thou shalt thy self thy peace hereafter make,
But as to me certaine I cannot leve,
That she would it as now for evill take,

Why should than for feare thine herte quake,
Thinke how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love, and why shal thou not have another ?

“ And Troilus, o thing I dare thee swer,
That if Creseide, which that is thy lefe,
Now loveth thee, as well as thou dost her,
God helpe me so, she nill not take a grefe,
Though thou do bote anon in this mischefe,
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe,
Than is she false, so love her well the lasse.

“ Forthy, take herte, and think right as a knight,
Through love is broken alday every law,
Kith now somewhat thy courage and thy might,
Have mercie on thy selfe for any awe,
Let not this wretched wo thine herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and seven,
And if thou die a martir, go to Heaven.

“ I woll my selfe ben with thee at this dede,
Though I and all my kin upon a stound,
Should in a strete, as dogs, ligger dede,
Through girt with many a bloodie wound,
In every case I woll a friend be found,
And if thee listeth here sterven as a wretch,
Adieu, the devill speede him that retch.”

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quicken,
And saied, “ Friend, graunt mercie, I assent,
But certainly, thou mayst nat so me pricken,
Ne paine none ne may me so torment,
That for no case it is not mine entent,
At shorte wordes, though I dien should,
To ravishen her, but if her selfe it would.”

“Why, so mean I” (quod Pandarus) “al this day,
But tell me than, hast thou her well assaid,
That sorowest thus?” and he answerde him “Nay.”
“Wherof art thou” (quod Pandare) “than dismaid,
That noste not that she woll ben evill apaid
To ravishen her, sens thou hast not ben there,
But if that Jove told it in thine eare ?

“Forthy, rise up as naught ne were, anone,
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wend,
Or he may wondren whider thou art gone,
Thou must with wisdom him and other blend,
Or upon case he may after thee send
Or thou beware, and shortly brother dere
Be glad, and let me werke in this mattere.

“For I shall shape it so, that sikerly
Thou shalt this night sometime in some manere
Come spoken with thy ladie prively,
And by her wordes eke, as by her chere,
Thou shalt full soone aperceive and well here
Of her entent, and in this case the best,
And fare now well, for in this point I rest.”

The swifte fame, whiche that fals thinges
Equall reporteth, like the thinges true,
Was throughtout Troy yfled, with prest winges,
Fro man to man, and made his tale all new,
How Calcas doughter with her bright hew,
At parliment without words more,
Ygraunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

The whiche tale anon right as Creseide
Had heard, she, which that of her father rought
(As in this case) right naught, ne whan he deide,
Full busily to Jupiter besought

Yeve him mischance, that this tretis brought :
But shortly, least these tales sooth were,
She durst at no wight asken it for fere.

As she that had her herte and all her mind
On Troylus yset so wonder fast,
That al this world ne might her love unbind,
Ne Troylus out of her herte cast,
She would been his while that her life may last,
And she thus brenneth both in love and drede,
So that she n'ist what was best to rede.

But as men seene in toune, and all about,
That women usen hir friends to visite,
So to Creseide of women came a rout,
For pitous joy, and wenden her delite,
And with hir tales dere ynough a mite,
These women, which that in the citie dwell,
They set hem doune, and sayd as I shall tell.

(Quod, first that one) "I am glad truely,
Because of you, that shall your father see,"
Another sayd, "Ywis, so am not I,
For all too little hath she with us be:"

(Quod tho the third) "I hope ywis that she
Shall bringen us the peace on every side,
That whan she goth, almighty God her gide."

Tho wordes and tho womannish thinges
She herd hem right as thogh she thence were :
For God it wote, her herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat emong hem there,
Her advertence is alway els where,
For Troilus full fast her soule sought,
Withouten word, on him alway she thought.

These women that thus wenden her to please,
About naught gan all hir tales spend,
Such vanitie ne can done her none ease,
As she that all this meane while brend
Of other passion than they wend,
So that she felt almost her herte die
For wo, and werie of that companie.

For which might she no lenger restraine
Her teares, they gan so up to well,
That gave signes of her bitter paine,
In which her spirit was, and must dwell,
Remembring her from Heaven unto which Hell
She fallen was, sens she forgo the sight
Of Troilus, and sorrowfully she sight.

And thilke fooles, sitting her about,
Wende that she wept and sighed sore,
Because that she should out of the rout
Departen, and never play with hem more,
And they that had knowen her of yore,
See her so wepe, and thoght it was kindnesse,
And ech of hem wept eke for her distresse.

And busily they gonnen hir to comferten
On thing God wot, on which she litle thoght,
And with hir tales wenden her disporten,
And to be glad they ofte her besought,
But such an ease therwith they her wrought,
Right as a man is eased for to fele,
For ache of head, to clawen him on his hele.

But after all this nice vanitie,
They took hir leve, and home they wenten all,
Creseide full of sorrowfull pitie,
Into her chamber up went out of the hall,

And on her bedde she gan for dead to fall,
In purpose never thence for to rise,
And thus she wrought, as I shall you devise.

Hir ownded hair, that sonnish was of hew,
She rent, and eke her fingers long and smale
She wrong full oft, and bad God on her rew,
And with the death to do bote on her bale,
Her hewe whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bare witnesse of her wo, and her constreint;
And thus she spake, sobbing in her compleint.

“Alas” (quod she) “out of this regioun,
I wofull wretch and infortuned wight,
And borne in cursed constellatioun,
Mote gon, and thus departen fro my knight,
Wo worth alas, that ilke daies light,
On which I saw him first with eyen twaine,
That causeth me, and I him all this paine.”

Therewith the teares from her eyen two
Doun fell, as shoure in Aprill swithe,
Her white breast she bet, and for the wo,
After the death she cried a thousand sithe,
Sens he that wont her wo was for to lithe,
She mote forgone, for which disaventure
She held her selfe a forlost creature.

She said, “How shall he done and I also
How should I live, if that I from him twin?
O dere herte eke that I love so,
Who shall that sorow slaen, that ye ben in?
O Calcas, father, thine be all this sin:
O mother mine, that cleped wert Argive,
Wo worth that day that thou me bare on live.

“To what fine should I live and sorowen thus?
How should a fish withouten water dure?
What is Creside worth from Troilus?
How should a plant or lives creature
Live withouten his kind noriture?
For which full oft a by word here I sey,
That rootlesse mote greene soone dey.

“I shal done thus, sens neither sword ne dart
Dare I none handle, for the cruelte,
That ilke day that I fro you depart,
If sorow of that n’ill nat my bane be,
Than shall no meat ne drinke come in me,
Till I my soule out of my brest unsheath,
And thus my selven woll I done to death.

“And Troilus, my clothes everychone
Shull blacke ben, in tokening, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agone,
That wont was you to set in quiete,
And of mine order aye till death me mete,
The observaunce ever in your absence,
Shall sorrow ben complaint and abstinence.

“Mine herte and eke the woful ghost therein
Bequeath I with your spirit to complaine
Eternally, for they shall never twin,
For though in yearth twinned be we twaine,
Yet in the field of pitie, out of paine,
That hight Elisos, shall we ben yfere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

“Thus, herte mine, for Antenor alas
I soone shall be chaunged, as I wene,
But how shull ye done in this sorowfull caas,
How shall your tender herte this sustene?

But herte mine, foryet this sorow and tene,
And me also, for soothly for to sey,
So ye well fare, I retche not to dey."

How might it ever redde ben or ysong
The plaint that she made in her distresse,
I n'ot, but as for me my little tong
If I discriven would her heavinesse,
It should make her sorrow seeine lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Her high complaint, and therefore I it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was unto Creseide, as ye have heard devise,
That for the best it was recorded thus,
And he full glad to done him that servise,
Unto Creseide in a full secret wise,
There as she lay in tourment and in rage,
Came her to tell all holy his message.

And fond that she her selven gan to grete
Full pitously, for with her salte teres,
Her breast and face ybathed was full wete,
Her mightie tresses of her sounish heres
Unbroiden, hangen all about her eares,
Which yave him very signe of mattire
Of death, which that her herte gan desire.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorrow anon
Her tearie face atwixt her armes hide,
For which this Pandare is so wo bigon,
That in the hous he might unneth abide,
As he that felt sorrow on every side,
For if Creseide had erst complained sore,
Tho gan she plaine a thousand times more.

And in her aspre plaint, thus she seide :
“ Pandare, first of joies more than two
Was cause, causing unto me Creseide,
That now transmued ben in cruell wo,
Whether shall I say to you welcome or no ?
That alderfirst me brought unto servise
Of love alas, that endeth in such wise.

“ Endeth than love in wo ? Ye or men lieth,
And all worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The end of blisse aye sorrow it occupieth,
And who troweth not that it so be,
Let him upon me wofull wretche see,
That my selfe hate, and aye my birth curse,
Feeling alway, fro wicke I go to worse.

“ Who so me seeth, he seeth sorow all atonis,
Paine, tourment, plaint, wo and distresse,
Out of my wofull body harme there none is,
As langour, anguish, cruell bitternesse,
Annoy, smart, drede, furie, and eke sicknesse,
I trow ywis from Heaven teares raine,
For pitie of my aspre and cruell paine.”

“ And thou my suster, full of discomfort,”
(Quod Pandarus) “ what thinkest thou to do ?
Why ne hast thou to thy selven some resport ?
Why wilt thou thus thy selfe alas fordo ?
Leave all this werke, and take now heed to
That I shall saine, and herken of good entent
This message, that by me Troilus you sent.”

Tourned her tho Creseide a wo making,
So great, that it a death was for to see,
“ Alas” (quod she) “ what wordes may ye bring,
What woll my dere herte saine to mee,

Which that I drede nevermore to see,
Woll he have plaint or teares ere I wend?
I have ynough, if he thereafter send."

She was right such to seene in her visage,
As is that wight that men on beare bind,
Her face like of Paradis the image,
Was all ychaunged in another kind,
The play, the laughter men were wont to find
On hir, and eke her joyes everichone
Ben fled, and thus lieth Creseide alone.

About her eyen two, a purple ring
Bitrent, in soothfast tokening of her paine,
That to behold it was a deadly thing,
For which Pandare might nat restraine
The teares from his eyen for to raine,
But nathelesse as he best might he seide
From Troilus these wordes to Creseide.

"Lo nece, I trow ye han heard all how
The king with other lordes for the best,
Hath made eschaunge of Antenor and you,
That cause is of this sorow and this unrest,
But how this case doth Troilus molest,
This may none yearthly mannes tongue say,
For very wo, his wit is all away.

"For which we have so sorowed, he and I,
That into little it had us both slawe,
But through my counsaile this day finally,
He somewhat is fro weeping withdrawe,
And seemeth me that he desireth fawe
With you to ben all night for to devise
Remedie of this, if there were any wise.

“ This short and plain, the effect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit can comprehend,
For ye that ben of tourment in such rage,
May to no long prologue as now entend.
And hereupon ye may answer him send,
And for the love of God my nece dere,
So leave this wo or Troilus be here.”

“ Great is my wo,” (quod she) and sighed sore,
As she that feeleth deadly sharpe distresse,
But yet to me his sorrow is mokell more,
That love him bet than he himselfe I gesse,
Alas, for me hath he such hevinesse,
Can he for me so pitously complaine,
Ywis this sorow doubleth all my paine.

“ Grevous to me God wot is for to twin,”
(Quod she) “ but yet it harder is to me,
To seene that sorrow which that he is in,
For well wot I, it woll my bane be,
And die I woll in certaine tho” (quod she :)
“ But bid him come, er deth that thus me threteth,
Drive out the ghost which in mine herte beteth.”

These wordes said, she on her armes two
Fell gruffe, and gan to weepen pitously :
(Quod Pandarus) “ Alas, why doe ye so ?
Sens ye well wote the time is fast by
That he shall come, arise up hastily,
That he you nat biwopen thus ne find,
But ye woll have him wode out of his mind.

“ For wist he that ye farde in this manere,
He would himselfe slea : and if I wend
To have this fare, he should not come here,
For all the good that Priam may dispend :

For to what fine he would anon pretend,
That know I well, and forthy yet I sey,
So leave this sorow, or plainly he woll dey.

“ And shapeth you his sorow for to abredge,
And nat encrease, lefe nece swete,
Beth rather to him cause of plat than edge,
And with some wisdome ye his sorrowes bete :
What helpeth it to weepen full a strete,
Or though ye both in salt teares dreint ?
Bet is a time of cure aye than of pleint.

“ I meane thus, whan I him hither bring,
Sens ye be wise, and both of one assent,
So shapeth how to distourbe your going,
Or come ayen soone after ye be went,
Women been wise, in short avisement,
And let seene how your wit shall availe,
And what that I may helpe, it shall not faile.”

“ Go,” (quod Creseide) “ and, uncle, truely
I shall done all my might me to restraine
From weeping in his sight, and busily
Him for to glad, I shall done all my paine,
And in my herte seeken every vaine,
If to his sore there may ben founden salve,
It shall nat lacke certaine on mine halve.”

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he sought,
Till in a temple he found him all alone,
As he that of his life no lenger rought,
But to the pitous goddes everichone,
Full tenderly he praid, and made his mone,
To done him soone out of the world to pace,
For well he thoght there was none other grace.

And shortly all the soothe for to sey,
He was so fallen in dispaire that day,
That utterly he shope him for to dey,
For right thus was his argument alway,
He saied he nas but lorne, welaway,
“For all that commeth, commeth by necessitie,
Thus to ben lorne, it is my destinie.

“For certainly, this wote I well,” he said,
“That foresight of devine purveiaunce
Had seen alway me to forgone Creseide,
Sens God seethe every thing out of doutance
And hem disposeth through his ordinance,
In his merites soothly for to be,
As they shull comen by predestine.

“But nathelesse, alas, whom shall I leve,
For there ben greates clerkes many one,
That destinie, through argumentes preve,
And some saine, that nedely there is none,
But that free choice is yeven us everychone:
O welaway, so sligh arn clerkes old,
That I n’ot whose opinion I may hold.

“For some men sain, that God seeth all beforne,
Ne God may nat deceived ben parde,
Than mote it fallen, though men had it sworn,
That purveiaunce hath seene beforne to be,
Wherefore I say, that from eterne if he
Hath wist beforn our thought eke as our dede,
We have no free choice, as these clerkes rede.

“For other thought, nor other deed also,
Might never been, but such as purveyaunce,
Which may nat been deceived never mo,
Hath feled biforne, withouten ignoraunce,

For if there might ben a variaunce
To writen out fro Goddes purveying,
There nere no prescience of thing comming.

“But it were rather an opinion
Uncertaine, and no stedfast foreseeing,
And certes that were an abusion,
That God should have no perfite clere wetting
More than we men that have doutous wening,
But such an errour upon God to gesse,
Were false, and foule, and wicked cursednesse.

“Eke this is an opinion of some,
That have hir top ful high and smooth yshore,
They saine right thus, that thing is nat to come,
For that the prescience hath seene before
That it shall come, but they sain that therfore
That it shall come, therefore the purveyaunce
Wote it beforne withouten ignoraunce.

“And in this manner this necessite
Retourneth in his part contrary againe,
For needfully behoveth it nat to be,
That thilke thinges fallen in certaine
That ben purveied, but needfully as they saine
Behoveth it that thinges which that fall,
That they in certaine ben purveyed all.

“I meane as though I laboured me in this,
To inquire which thing cause of which thing be,
As whether that the prescience of God is
The certaine cause of the necessite
Of thinges that to comen be parde,
Or if necessitie of thing comming,
Be cause certaine of the purveying.

“ But now ne enforce I me not in shewing,
How the order of the causes stant, but well wot I
That it behoveth, that the befalling
Of thinges wiste before certainly,
Be necessarie, all seeme it not thereby,
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, all fall it foule or faire.

“ For if there sit a man yond on a see,
That by necessitie behoveth it,
That certes thine opinion sooth be,
That wenest or conjectest that he sit,
And further over, now ayenward yet,
Lo right so is it on the part contrarie,
As thus, now hearken, for I woll nat tarie.

“ I say, that if the opinion of thee
Be sooth for that he sit, than say I this,
That he mote sitten by necessitee,
And thus necessitie in either is,
For in him nede of sitting is ywis,
And in the nede of sooth, and thus forsoth
There mote necessitie ben in you both.

“ But thou maist saine the man sit nat therfore,
That thine opinion of his sitting sooth is,
But rather for the man sate there before,
Therefore is thine opinion sooth ywis,
And I say though the cause of sooth of this
Commeth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is enterchaunged both in him and in thee.

“ Thus in the same wise out of doubtance,
I may well maken, as it semeth me,
My reasoning of Goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be,

By whiche reason men may well ysee,
That thilke thinges that in earth yfall,
That by necessitie they comen all.

“ For although that forthing shall come ywis
Therefore it is purveyed certainly,
Nat that it commeth, for it purveyed is,
Yet nathelesse behoveth it needfully,
That thing to come be purveyed truly,
Or else thinges that purveyed be,
That they betiden by necessite.

“ And this suffiseth right ynough certaine,
For to destroy our free choise everydell,
But now is this abusion to saine,
That falling of the thinges temporell,
Is cause of the goddes prescience eternell;
Now truely that is a false sentence,
That thing to com shuld cause his prescience.

“ What might I wene, and I had such a thought?
But that God purveieth thing that is to come,
For that it is to come, and else nought:
So might I wene, that thinges all and some,
That whylome ben befall and overcome,
Ben cause of thilke souveraine purveyaunce,
That forwote all, withouten ignoraunce.

“ And over all this, yet say I more therto,
That right as whan I wote there is a thing,
Ywis that thing mote needfully be so,
Eke right so, whan I wot a thing comming,
So mote it come; and thus they befalling
Of thinges that ben wist before the tide,
They mowe not ben eschewed on no side.”

Than said he thus, "Almighty Jove in trone,
That wotest of all this thing the soothfastnesse.
Rew on my sorrow and do me dien sone,
Or bring Creseide and me fro this distresse."
And while he was in all this heavinesse,
Disputing with himselfe in this matere,
Came Pandare in, and said as ye may here.

"O mighty God" (quod Pandarus) "in trone,
Eigh, who saw ever a wise man faren so?
Why Troilus, what thinkest thou to done?
Hast thou such lust to ben thine owne fo?
What, parde, yet is nat Creseide ago,
Why list thee so thy selfe fordone for drede,
That in thine head thine eyen semen dede.

"Hast thou nat lived many a yere beforne
Withouten her, and farde full well at ease?
Art thou for her and for none other borne.
Hath Kind thee wrought al only her to please?
Let be and thinke right thus in thy disease,
That in the dice right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love there come and gon plesaunces.

"And yet this is a wonder most of all,
Why thou thus sorowest, sith thou wost nat yet
Touching her going, how that it shall fall,
Ne if she can her selfe distourben it,
Thou hast nat yet assaied all her wit;
A man may all betime his necke bede
Whan it shall off, and sorowen at the nede.

"Forthy, take hede of all that I shall say,
I have with her yspoke, and long ybe,
So as accorded was betwixe us twey,
And evermore me thinketh thus, that she

Hath somewhat in her hertes privite,
Wherewith she can, if I shall aright rede,
Disturbe all this, of which thou art in drede.

“For which my counsell is, whan it is night,
Thou to her go, and make of this an end,
And blisfull Juno, through her great might,
Shall (as I hope) her grace unto us send,
Mine herte seith certaine she shall nat wend,
And forthy, put thine herte a while in rest,
And hold thy purpose, for it is the best.”

This Troilus answerde, and sighed sore,
“Thou saist right well, and I will do right so,”
And what him list, he said unto him more,
And whan that it was time for to go,
Full prively himselfe withouten mo
Unto her came, as he was wont to done,
And how they wrought, I shall you tell soone.

Sooth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the paine hir hertes for to twist,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes tooke, and after kist,
The lasse wofull of hem bothe nist
Where that he was, ne might o word outbring,
As I said erst, for wo and for sobbing.

The wofull teares that they leten fall,
As bitter weren out of teares kind
For paine, as is ligne aloes, or gall,
So bitter teares wept not as I find
The wofull Mirra, through the barke and rind,
That in this world there n’is so hard an herte,
That n’olde have rewed ou hir paines smart.

But whan hir wofull wery ghostes twaine
Returned ben, there as hem ought to dwell,
And that somewhat to weken gan the paine
By length of plaint, and ebben gan the well
Of hir teares, and the herte unswell,
With broken voice, al horse for shrigh, Crescid
To Troilus these ilke wordes seid.

“ O Jove, I die, and mercy thee beseech,
Helpe Troilus :” and therewithal her face
Upon his brest she laid, and lost her spech,
Her wofull spirite from his proper place
Right with the worde away in point to pace,
And thus she lith, with hewes pale and grene,
That whilom fresh and fairest was to sene.

This Troilus that on her gan behold,
Cleping her name, and she lay as for deed,
Withouten answeere, and felt her limmes cold,
Her eien throwen upward to her heed :
This sorowful man can now non other rede,
But oft time her colde mouth he kist,
Where him was wo, God and himself it wist.

He riseth him up, and long straite he her leide,
For signe of life, for aught he can or may,
Can he none finde, in nothing of Creseide,
For which his song full oft is “ Welaway :”
But whan he saw that spechlesse she lay,
With sorowful voice, and herte of blisse al bare,
He said, how she was fro this world yfare.

So after that he long had her complained,
His hondes wrong, and said that was to sey,
And with his teeres salt her brest berained,
He gan tho teeres wipen off full drey,

And pitously gan for the soule prey,
And said, " Lord, that set art in thy throne,
Rewe eke on me, for I shall folow her sone."

She colde was, and without sentement,
For ought he wote, for brethe felt he none,
And this was him a preignant argument,
That she was forth out of this world agone :
And whan he saw there was non other wounce,
He gan her limmes dresse, in such manere,
As men don hem that shall ben laide on bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerde anon out of his sheth he twight,
Him selfe to sleen, how sore that him smart,
So that his soule, her soule folowen might,
There as the dome of Minos would it dight,
Sith love and cruel fortune it ne would,
That in this world he lenger liven should.

Than said he thus, fulfilde of high disdaine,
" O cruel Jove, and thou Fortune adverse,
This is all and some, that falsly have ye slaine
Creseide, and sith ye may do me ne werse,
Fie on your might and werkes so diverse,
Thus cowardly ye shull me never winne,
There shall no deth me fro my lady twiune.

" For I this world, sith ye have slain her thus,
Woll let, and folow her spirite low or hie,
Shal never lover saine that Troilus,
Dare nat for feare with his lady die,
For certaine I woll beare her companie,
But sithe ye wol nat suffre us liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben ifere.

“ And thou citie, in which I live in wo,
And thou Priam, and brethren al ifere,
And thou my mother, farewell, for I go,
And Attropos make redy thou my bere :
And thou Creseide, O swete herte dere,
Receive now my spirite,” would he sey
With swerde at herte, all redy for to dey.

But as God would, of swough she abraide,
And gan to sighe, and Troilus she cride,
And he answerde, “ Lady mine Creseide,
Live ye yet ? ” and let his swerde doun glide :
“ Ye herte mine, that thanked be Cupide,”
(Quod she) and therewithal she sore sight,
And he began to glade her as he might.

Toke her in armes two and kist her oft,
And her to glad, he did al his entent,
For which her gost, that flikered aie a loft,
Into her wofull herte ayen it went :
But at the last, as that her eye glent
Aside, anon she gan his sworde asprie,
As it lay bare, and gan for feare crie.

And asked him why he had it out draw,
And Troilus anon the cause her told,
And how himself therewith he wold have slain,
For which Creseide upon him gan behold,
And gan him in her armes faste fold,
And said, “ O mercy God, lo which a dede,
Alas, how nigh we weren bothe dede.

“ Than if I hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye would have slain your selfe anon ? ” (quod she.)
“ Ye dontlesse : ” and she answerde, “ Alas,
For by that ilke lorde that made me,

I n'olde a furlong way on live have be.
After your deth, to have ben crowned quene
Of al the londe the Sunne on shineth shene.

“ But with this selve sword, which that here is
My selfe I would have slain” (quod she) “ tho :
But ho, for we have right inough of this,
And let us rise and straite to bedde go :
And there let us speken of our wo,
For by that mortar, which that I see brenne,
Know I ful well, that day is nat farre henne.”

Whan they wer in hir bed in armes fold,
Naught was it like tho nightes here beforene,
For pitously ech other gan behold.
As they that hadden al hir blisse ylorne,
Bewailing aie the day that they were borne,
Til at the last, this sorowful wight Creseide,
To Troilus these ilke wordes seide.

“ Lo herte mine, wel wote ye this” (quod she)
“ That if a wight alway his wo complaine,
And seketh nat how holpen for to be,
It n'is but folie, and encrease of paine :
And sens that here assembled be we twaine,
To finde bote of wo that we ben in,
It were time al sone to begin.

“ I am a woman, as ful wel ye wotte,
And as I am avised sodainly,
So wol I tel you, while it is hotte,
Me thinketh thus, that neyther ye nor I,
Ought halfe this wo to maken skilfully,
For there is art inough for to redresse,
That yet is misse, and sleen this hevinesse.

“ Soth is, the wo the whiche we ben inne,
For aught I wote, for nothing eles is,
But for the cause that we should twinne,
Considred al, there n’is no more amis :
And what is than a remedy unto this ?
But that we shape us sone for to mete,
This al and some, my dere herte swete.

“ Now that I shall wel bringen it about
To comen ayen, sone after that I go,
Thereof am I no maner thing in dout,
For dredelesse, within a weke or two
I shal ben here : and that it may be so,
By all right, and in wordes few,
I shal you wel an heape of waies shew.

“ For which I woll nat maken long sermon,
For time ylost may not recovered be,
But I will go to my conclusion,
And to the best, in aught that I can see :
And for the love of God foryeve it me,
If I speake aught ayenst your hertes rest,
For truly I speake it for the best.

“ Making alway a protestation,
That nowe these wordes which I shal say,
N’is but to shewe you my mocion,
To find unto our helpe the beste way,
And take it no otherwise I pray,
For in effect, what so ye me commaund,
That wol I done, for that is no demaund.

“ Now herkeneth this, ye have wel understond
My going graunted is by parliment,
So ferforth that it may not ben withstond,
For al this world, as by my judgement :

And sithe there helpeth none avisement,
To letten it, lette it passe out of mind,
And let us shape a better way to find.

“The sothe is, the twinning of us twaine,
Wol us disease, and cruelly anoie :
But him behoveth sometime have a paine,
That serveth love, if that he woll have joie :
And sith I shall no farther out of Troie
Than I may ride ayen on halfe a morow,
It ought lasse causen us for to sorow.

“So as I shal nat so ben hid in mew,
That day by day, mine owne herte dere,
Sens well ye wote that it is now a trew,
Ye shal ful wel al mine estate here :
And er that truce is done, I shal ben here,
Than have ye bothe Antenor ywonne,
And me also, bethe glad now if ye conne.

“And thinke right thus, Crescide is now agon,
But what, she shal come hastely ayen,
And whan alas ? by God, lo right anon
Er daies ten, this dare I safely saine,
And than at erste, shal we be so faine,
So as we shal toghthers ever dwell,
That all this world ne might our blisse tell.

“I see that oft time, there as we ben now
That for the best, our counsaile for to hide,
Ye speke nat with me, nor I with you
In fourteenight, ne see you go ne ride :
May ye nat ten daies than abide,
For mine honour, in such aventure ?
Ywis ye mowe, or eles lite endure.

“ Ye know eke how that all my kin is here,
But if that onely it my father be,
And eke mine other thinges al yfere,
And namely my dere herte ye,
Whom that I n’olde leaven for to see,
For all this world, as wide as it hath space,
Or eles see I never Joves face.

“ Why trowe ye my father in this wise
Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede,
Lest in this tounne that folkes me dispise,
Bicause of him, for his unhappy dede ?
What wote my father what life that I lede,
For if he wist in Troie how well I fare,
Us neded for my wending nat to care.

“ Ye see, that every day eke more and more,
Men treate of peace, and it supposed is,
That men the quene Heleine shall restore,
And Grekes us restore that is mis :
Though there ne were comfort none but this,
That men purposen peace on every side,
Ye may the better at ease of herte abide.

“ For if that it be peace, mine herte dere,
The nature of the peace mote nedes drive,
That men must entrecomune yfere,
And to and fro eke ride and gone as blive,
Al day as thicke as been flien from an hive,
And every wight have liberty to bleve,
Where as him list, the bet withouten leve.

“ And tho so be that peace there may bene none,
Yet hither, though ther never peace ne were,
I must come, for whider should I gone,
Or how mischaunce should I dwell there

Among tho men of armes ever in fere,
For which, as wisely God my soule rede,
I can nat sene wherof ye should drede.

“ Have here another way, if it so be
That all this thing ne may you not suffice,
My father, as he knowen well parde,
Is olde, and eke full of covetise,
And I right now have founden al the gise,
Withouten nette, wherwith I shal him hent,
And herkeneth now, if that ye woll assent.

“ Lo Troilus, men saine, that ful hard it is
The wolfe ful, and the wedder hole to have,
This is to saine, that men full oft ywis,
Mote spenden parte, the remnant for to save :
For aie with gold, men may the herte grave,
Of him that set is upon covetise,
And how I meane, I shal it you devise.

“ The moveable, which that I have in this toun,
Unto my father shall I take, and say,
That right for trust, and for salvatioun,
It sent is from a frende of his or tway,
The whiche frendes fervently him pray,
To sende after more and that in hie,
While that this toun stant thus in jeopardie.

“ And that shall be of gold an huge quantite,
Thus shal I sain, but lest folke it aspide,
This may be sent by no wight but by me :
I shal eke shewen him, if peace betide,
What frendes that I have on every side,
Toward the court, to don the wrathe pace,
Of Priamus, and do him stonde in grace.

“ So what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shall him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in Heven his soule is, shal he mete,
For all Apollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculing, availeth not three hawes :
Desire of gold shall so his soule blend,
That as me list, I shall well make an end.

“ And if he would aught by his sorte it preve,
If that I lie, in certaine I shall fond
To disturben him, and plucke him by the sleve,
Making his sorte and bearen him on hond,
He hath nat well the goddes understand,
For goddes speke in amphibologies,
And for o sothe, they tellen twenty lies.

“ Eke drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shall I saine, and that his coward herte,
Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of Delphos stert :
And but I make him sone to convert,
And done my rede, within a day or twey,
I wol to you oblige me to dey.”

And truely, as written wel I find,
That al this thing was said of good entent,
And that her herte trewe was and kind
Towardes him, and spake right as she ment,
And that she starfe for wo nigh whan she went,
And was in purpose ever to be trewe,
Thus writen they that of her werkes knew.

This Troilus, with herte and eeres sprad,
Herde all this thing devised to and fro,
And verily it seemed that he had
The selve witte, but yet to let her go

His herte misyave him evermo,
But finally he gan his herte wrest,
To trusten her, and toke it for the best.

For which the great fury of his penaunce,
Wasqueint with hope, and therewith hem betwene
Began for joye the amorous daunce,
And as the birdes, whan the Sunne shene,
Deliten in hir songe, in leves greene,
Right so the wordes, that they spake yfere,
Deliten hem, and made hir hertes chere.

But nathelesse, the wending of Creseide,
For all this world may nat out of his mind,
For which full oft he pitously her preide,
That of her heste he might her trewe find:
And said her, " Certes if ye be kind,
And but ye come at daie set, in Troie,
Ne shal I never have heale, honor, ne joie.

" For al so sothe as Sunne uprist to morow,
And God so wisely thou me woful wretch
To reste bring, out of this cruel sorow,
I wol my selven slee, if that ye dretch:
But of my death though little be to retch,
Yet er that ye me causen so to smart,
Dwel rather here, my owne swete herte.

" For truely mine owne lady dere,
The sleighes yet, that I have herd you stere,
Ful shapely ben to fallen all yfere,
For thus men saith, that one thinketh the bere,
But al another thinketh the ledere,
Your sire is wise, and said is out of drede,
Men may the wise out renne, and not out rede.

“ It is full harde to halten unespied
Before a crepil, for he can the craft,
Your father is in sleight as Argus eied,
For al be it that his movable is him biraft,
His olde sleight is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal nat blende him for your womanhede
Ne faine aright, and that is all my drede.

“ I n’ot if peace shal evermo betide,
But peace or no, for earnest ne for game,
I wote sith Calcas on the Grekes side
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule his name,
Ne dare no more come here ayen for shame,
For which that we, for ought I can espie,
To trusten on, n’is but a fantasie.

“ Ye shal eke seen your father shall you glose,
To ben a wife, and as he can well prech,
He shal some Greke so preise and wel alose,
That ravishen he shal you with his spech :
Or do you done by force, as he shall tech,
And Troilus on whom ye n’il have routh,
Shall causelesse so sterven in his trouth.

“ And over al this your father shall dispise
Us al, and saine this cite is but lorne,
And that th’assege never shall arise,
For why ? the Grekes have it al sworne,
Till we ben slaine, and doune our walles torne,
And thus he shall you with his wordes fere,
That aie drede I, that ye wol bleven there.

“ Ye shall eke sene so many a lusty knight,
Among the Grekes ful of worthinesse,
And ech of hem, with herte, wit and might
To pleasen you, done al his businesse,

That ye shull dullen of the rudenesse
Of sely Troians, but if routhe
Remorde you, or vertue of your trouthe.

“ And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende,
Ne dredelesse, in me there may nat sinke
O good opinion, if that ye wende,
For why? your fathers sleight woll us shende,
And if ye gone, as I have tolde you yore,
So thinke I nam but deed, withouten more.

“ For which with humble, true and pitous herte
A thousand times mercy I you pray,
So reweth on mine aspre paines smart,
And doth somewhat, as that I shall you say:
And let us steale away betwixt us tway,
And thinke that foly is, whan a man may chese
For accident, his substaunce for to lese.

“ I meane thus, that sens we mowe or day
Wel steale away, and ben together so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
(In case ye shoulde to your father go)
If that ye mighten come ayen or no:
Thus meane I, that were a great follie
To put that sikernes in jeopardie.

“ And vulgarly to speken of substaunce,
Of treasure may we both with us lede,
Ynough to live in honour and pleasaunce,
Till unto time that we shall ben dede,
And thus we may eschewen all this drede,
For every other waie ye can record,
Mine herte ywis may therewith nat acord.

“ And hardely ne dredeth no poverté,
For I have kin and frendes eles where,
That though we comen in our bare sherte,
Us should never lacke golde ne geere,
But ben honoured while we dwelten there,
And go we anone, for as in mine entent,
This is the best, if that ye woll assent.”

Creseide with a sigh, right in this wise
Answerde, “ Ywis, my dere herte trew,
We may well steale away, as ye devise,
And finden such unthrifty waies new :
But afterward full sore it woll us rew,
And helpe me God so at my most nede,
As causelesse ye suffren al this drede.

“ For thilke day that I for cherishing,
Or drede of fater, or for any other wight,
Or for estate, delite, or for wedding,
Be false to you, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnus doughter Juno, through her might,
As wood as Achamante do me dwell
Eternally with Stix in the pit of Hell.

“ And this on every god celestiall
I swere it you and eke on eche goddessse,
On every nimphe, and deite infernall,
On satyry and faunny more and lesse,
That halve goddes ben of wildernessse,
And Attropos my threde of life to brest,
If I be false, now trowe me if you lest.

“ And thou Simois, that, as an arowe, clere
Through Troy rennest, aie downward to the see,
Be witnesse of this word, that saied is here,
That thilke day that I untrewe be

To Troilus, mine owne herte fre,
That thou return backwarde to thy well,
And I with body and soule sinke to Hell.

“ But that ye speake away thus for to go,
And letten all your frendes, God forbede,
For any woman that ye shoulde so,
And namely, sens Troy hath now such nede
Of helpe, and eke of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my life lay in ballaunce,
And your honor, God shild us fro mischaunce.

“ And if so be that peace hereafter be take,
As all day happeth after angre game,
Why lord the sorow and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne durst come ayen for shame,
And ere that ye jeoparden so your name,
Beth nat too hasty in this hotte fare,
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

“ What trowe ye the people eke all about
Would of it say? it is full light to arede,
They woulde say, and swere it out of dout,
That love ne drave you nat to done this dede
But lust voluptuous, and coward drede,
Thus were all lost ywis, mine herte dere
Your honour, whiche that now shineth clere.

“ And also thinketh on mine honeste,
That floureth yet, how foul I should it shend,
And with what filth it spotted shulde be,
If in this forme I should with you wend,
Ne though I lived unto the worldes end,
My name should I never ayenward win,
Thus were I lost, and that were routh and sin.

“And forthy, slee with reason all this hete,
Men sain, the suffraunt overcommeth parde,
Eke whoso woll have lefe, he lefe mote lete,
Thus maketh vertue of necessite
By patience, and thinke that lord is he
Of fortune aye, that naught woll of her retch,
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wretch.

“And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Or Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Lion passe out of this Aritee,
I woll been here, withouten any wene,
I meane, as helpe me Juno, Heavens quene,
The tenth day, but if that death me assaile,
I woll you scene, withouten any faile.”

“And now so this be sooth?” (quod Troilus)
“I shall well suffer unto the tenth day,
Sens that I see that nede it mote ben thus,
But for the love of God, if be it may,
So let us stolen prively away :
For ever in one, as for to live in rest,
Mine herte saieth that it woll be the best.”

“O mercy God, what life is this?” (quod she)
“Alas, ye slea me thus for very tene,
I see well now that ye mistrusten me,
For by your wordes it is well ysene :
Now for the love of Cinthia the shene,
Mistrust me nat thus causelesse for routh,
Sens to be true I have you plight my trouth.

“And thinketh well, that sometime it is wit
To spend a time, a time for to win,
Ne parde lorne am I nat fro you yet,

Though that we ben a day or two atwin :
Drive out tho fantasies you within,
And trusteth me, and leaveth eke your sorow,
Or here my trouth, I wol nat live til morow.

“ For if ye wist how sore it doth me smart,
Ye would cesse of this, for God thou wost
The pure spirit weepeth in mine herte
To seen you weepen, which that I love most,
And that I mote gone unto the Greekes host,
Ye, nere it that I wist a remedy
To com ayen, right here I wolde dy.

“ But certes I am not so nice a wight,
That I ne can imaginen a way
To come ayen that day that I have hight,
For who may holden a thing that woll away,
My father naught, for all his queint play,
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troy
Another day shall tourne us all to joy.

“ Forthy, with all mine herte I you beseke,
If that you list done aught for my prayere,
And for the love which that I love you eke,
That ere I departe fro you here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bring at rest
My herte, whiche is at point to brest.

“ And over all this I pray you,” (quod she tho)

“ My owne hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
Sith I am thine all hole withouten mo,
That while that I am absent, no pleasaunce
Of other, do me fro your remembraunce :
For I am ever agast, for why ? men rede,
That love is thing aye full of busie drede.

“For in this world there liveth lady none,
If that ye were untrue, as God defend,
That so betrayed were, or wo begon,
As I, that all trouthe in you entend :
And doubtlesse, if that iche other wend,
I nere but dead, and ere ye cause find,
For Goddes love, so beth ye nat unkind.”

To this answered Troilus and seide,
“Now God to whom there n’is no cause ywrie,
Me glad, as wis I never unto Creseide,
Sith thilke day I saw her first with eye,
Was false, ne never shall till that I die,
At short wordes, well ye may me leve,
I can no more, it shall be found at preve.”

“Graunt mercy, good herte mine, ywis” (quod
“And blisful Venus let me never sterve, [she]
Er I may stonde of pleasaunce in degre,
To quite him well, that so well can deserve :
And while that God my wit will me conserve
I shall so done, so true I have you found,
That aie honour to meward shall rebound.

“For trusteth well, that your estate royall,
Ne vain delite, nor onely worthinesse
Of you in werre or turnay marciall,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eke richesse :
Ne made me to rue on your distresse,
But moral virtue, grounded upon trouth,
That was the cause I first had on you routh.

“Eke gentle herte, and manhood that ye had,
And that ye had (as me thought) in despite
Every thing that sowned in to bad,
As rudenesse, and peoplish appetite
And that your reason bridled your delite,

This made aboven every creature,
That I was yours, and shall while I may dure.

“ And this may length of yeres nat fordo,
Ne remuablest fortune deface,
But Jupiter, that of his might may do
The sorowfull to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nightes tenne to meten in this place,
So that it may your herte and mine suffise,
And fareth now well, for time is that ye rise.”

And after that they long yplained had,
And oft ikist, and straite in armes fold,
The day gan rise, and Troilus him clad,
And rufully his lady gan behold :
As he that felt deathes cares cold,
And to her grace he gan him recommaund,
Where he was wo, this hold I no demaund.

For mannes hedde imaginen ne can,
Ne entendement consider, ne tongue tell
The cruell paines of this sorowfull man,
That passen every torment doune in Hell :
For whan he sawe that she ne might dwell,
Which that his soule out of his herte rent,
Withouten more, out of the chamber he went.

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS.

INCIPIT LIBER QUINTUS.

APROCHEN gan the fatall destine,
That Joves hath in disposicioun,
And to you angry Parcas sustren thre,
Committeth to done excucioune,
For which Creseide must out of the toun,
And Troilus shall dwell forth in pine,
Till Lachesis his threde no longer twine.

The golden tressed Phebus high on loft,
Thrise had all with his beames clere
The snowes molte, and Zephirus as oft
Ibrought ayen the tender leaves grene :
Sens that the sonne of Eccuba the quene
Began to love her first, for whom his sorrow
Was all, that she departe should a morow.

Full redy was at prime Diomede,
Creseide unto the Grekes hoste to lede,
For sorow of which, she felt her herte blede,
As she that n'iste what was best to rede :
And truely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never woman have the care,
Ne was so lothe out of a toune to fare.

This Troilus withouten rede or lore,
As man that hath his joies eke forlore,
Was waiting on his lady evermore,
As she that was sothfast croppe and more,
Of all his lust or joyes here tofore :
But Troilus, now farwell all thy joie,
For shalt thou never seen her eft in Troie.

Soth is, that while he bode in this manere,
He gan his wo full manly for to hide,
That well unneth it seen was in his chere,
But at the yate there she should out ride,
With certain folke he hoved her to abide,
So wo begon, all would he not him plain,
That on his horse unneth he sate for pain.

For ire he quoke, so gan his herte gnaw,
Whan Diomede on horse gan him dight,
And sayd unto himselfe this ilke saw,
“Alas,” (quod he) “thus foule a wretchednesse

Why suffre I it? why n'll I it redresse?
Were it nat bet at ones for to die,
Than evermore in langour thus to crie?

“Why n'll I make at ones rich and poore,
To have inough to done er that she go?
Why n'll I bring all Troie upon a roore?
Why n'll I slaen this Diomedes also?
Why n'll I rather with a man or two,
Steale her away? Why woll I this endure?
Why n'll I helpen to mine owne cure?”

But why he n'olde done so fell a deede,
That shall I sain, and why him list it spare,
He had in herte alway a maner drede,
Lest that Creseide, in rumour of this fare,
Should have ben slain, lo this was al his care,
And eles certain, as I sayed yore,
He had it done withouten wordes more.

Creseide whan she redy was to ride,
Full sorowfully she sighed, and sayd “Alas,”
But forth she mote, for aught that may betide,
And forth she rideth full sorowfully apaas:
There is no other remedy in this caas:
What wonder is, though that her sore smart
Whan she forgoeth her owne swete herte?

This Troilus in gise of curtesie,
With hauke on hond, and with an huge rout
Of knightes, rode and did her companie,
Passing all the valey ferre without,
And ferther would have ridden out of doubt,
Full faine, and wo was him to gone so sone,
But tourne he must, and it was eke to done.

And right with that was Antenor ycome,
Out of the Grekes hoste, and every wight
Was of him glad, and sayd he was welcome,
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He pained him, with all his full might
Him to with hold of weping at least,
And Antenor he kist, and made feast.

And therewithal he must his leave take,
And cast his eye upon her pitously,
And nere he rode, his cause for to make,
To take her by the honde al soberly :
And Lorde so she gan wepen tenderly,
And he full soft and slighly gan her seie,
“ Now hold your day, and doe me not to deie.”

With that his courser tourned he about,
With face pale, and unto Diomed
No worde he spake, ne none of all his rout,
Of which the sonne of Tideus toke hede,
As he that kouthe more than the crede,
In soche a craft, and by the rein her hent,
And Troilus to Troie homewardes went.

This Diomed, that lad her by the bridell,
Whan that he saw the folke of Troy away,
Thought, “ All my labor shall not been on idell.
If that I may, for somewhat shall I say :
For at the worst, it short maie our way,
I have heard say eke, times twise twelve,
He is a foole that woll foryete him selve.”

But nathelesse, this thought he well inough
That “ certainly I am about naught,
If that I speake of love, or make it to tough,
For doubtlesse, if she have in her thought,

Him that I gesse, he may not been ybrought
So sone away, but I shall find a meane,
That she nat yet wete shall what I meane."

This Diomedes, as he that could his good,
Whan this was done, gan fallen forth in spech
Of this and that, and aske why she stood
In soch disease, and gan her eke besech
That if that he encreasen might or ech
With any thing her ease, that she should
Commaunde it him, and said he done it would.

For truely he swore her as a knight,
That ther n'as thing, with which he might her please
That he nolde done his pain, and al his might
To done it, for to done her herte an ease:
And prayed her she would her sorrow appease,
And sayd, "Ywis we Greekes can have joy
To honouren you, as well as folke of Troy."

He said eke thus, "I wot you thinketh strange,
No wonder is, for it is to you new,
Th'acquaintance of these Trojans to change
For folke of Grece, that ye never knew:
But would never God, but if as true,
A Greeke ye should emong us all find,
As any Trojan is, and eke as kind.

"And bicause I swore you right now,
To ben your frende, and helpir to my might,
And for that more acquaintaunce eke of you
Have I had, than an other straunger wight:
So fro this forth, I pray you day and night,
Commaundeth me, how sore that me smart,
To done all that may like unto your herte.

“ And that ye me wold, as your brother treat,
And taketh not my frendship in dispite,
And though your sorowes been for thinges gret,
Not I nat why, but out of more respite,
Mine herte hath for to amend it great delite,
And if I may your harmes nat redresse,
I am right sory for your heavinesse.

“ For though ye Trojans with us Greekes wroth
Have many a day been, alway yet parde,
O god of love, in sothe we serven bothe :
And for the love of God my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me,
For truely there can no wight you serve,
That half so loth your wrathe would deserve.

“ And n'ere it that we been so nere the tent
Of Calcas, which that seen us bothe may,
I would of this you tell all mine entent,
But this ensealed till an other day :
Yeve me your honde, I am and shall be aie,
God helpe me so, while that my life may dure,
Your owne, aboven every creature.

“ Thus said I never er now to woman borne,
For God mine herte as wisely glad so,
I loved never woman here beforne,
As paramours, ne never shall no mo :
And for the love of God be not my fo,
All can I not to you, my lady dere,
Complain a right, for I am yet to lere.

“ And wondreth nought, mine owne lady bright,
Though that I speake of love to you thus blive,
For I have heard or this of many a wight,
Hath loved thing he never saw his live :

Eke I am not of power for to strive
Ayenst the god of love, but him obay
I woll alway, and mercy I you pray.

“There beeth so worthy knightes in this place,
And ye so faire, that everiche of hem all
Woll pain him to stonden in your grace,
But might to me so faire a grace fall
That ye me for your servaunt would call,
So lowly, ne so truely you serve,
N’ill none of hem, as I shall till I sterve.”

Creseide unto that purpose lite answerde,
As she that was with sorow oppressed so,
That in effect she naught his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two:
Her thought her sorowfull herte brest a two,
For whan she gan her father ferre espie,
Well nigh doune of her hors she gan to sic.

But nathelesse she thonketh Diomede,
Of all his travaile and his good chere,
And that him list his frendship to her bede,
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And woll do fain that is him lefe and dere,
And trusten him she would, and well she might,
As saied she, and from her hors she alight.

Her father hath her in his armes nome,
And twenty times he kist his doughter swete,
And saied: “O dere doughter mine, welcome,”
She said eke, she was fain with him to mete:
And stode forth muet, milde, and mansuete,
But here I leave her with her father dwell,
And forth I woll of Troilus you tell.

To Troy is come this wofull Troilus,
In sorowe aboven all sorowes smert,
With felon loke, and face dispitous,
Tho sodainly doune from his hors he stert,
And through his paleis with swolne herte,
To chamber he went, of nothing toke he hede
Ne none to him dare speke o worde for drede.

And there his sorowes that he spared had,
He yave an issue large, and death he cride,
And in his throwes, frenetike and mad
He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide,
He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cipride,
His birth, himselfe, his fate, and eke nature,
And save his ladie, every creature.

To bed he goth, and waileth there and turneth,
In furie, as doeth he Ixion in Hell,
And in this wise he nigh till day sojourneth,
But tho began his herte alite unswell,
Through teares, which that gounnen up to wel,
And pitiously he cried upon Creseide,
And to him self right thus he spake and seide.

“ Where is mine owne lady lefe and dere?
Where is her white brest, where is it, where?
Where been her armes, and her eyen clere
That yesterday this time with me were?
Now may I wepe alone many a teare,
And graspe about I may, but in this place
Save a pilow, I find naught to embrace.

“ How shal I doen? whan shal she come againe?
I n’ot alas, why let I her to go?
As would God I had as tho be slain:
O herte mine Creseide, O swete fo,

O lady mine, that I love and no mo,
To whom for ever more mine herte I vowe,
See how I die, ye n'll me not rescowe.

“Who seeth you now, my right lodesterre?
Who sitteth right now in your presence?
Who can comforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
Who speaketh for me right now in my absence?
Alas no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wote I, as evill as I ye fare.

“How should I thus ten daies full endure,
Whan I the firste night have all this tene?
How shall she eke sorowfull creature,
For tendernesce, how shall she this sustene,
Soche wo for me? o pitous, pale, and grene,
Shall been your freshe womanly face,
For langour, er ye tourne unto this place.”

And whan he fell in any slombringes,
Anon begin he shoulde for to grone,
And dreamen of the dreadfulest thinges
That might been: as mete he were alone
In place horrible, making aie his mone,
Or meten that he was emonges all
His enemies, and in hir hondes fall.

And therewithall his bodie should start,
And with the start all sodainly awake,
And soche a tremour fele about his herte,
That of the feare his bodie should quake:
And therewithall he should a noise make,
And seme as though he should fall depe,
From high alofe, and than he would wepe,

And rewen on himselfe so pitously,
That wonder was to here his fantasie.
An other time he should mightely
Comfort himselfe, and sain it was folie,
So causelesse, soche drede for to drie,
And eft begin his aspre sorowes new,
That every man might on his paines rew.

Who could tell all, or fully discribe
His wo, his plaint, his langour, and his pine?
Nat all the men that han or been on live,
Thou reader mayst thy self full well devine,
That soche a wo my wit can not define,
On idell for to write it should I swinke,
Whan that my wit is werie it to thinke.

On Heaven yet the sterres weren seen
Although full pale ywoxen was the Mone,
And whiten gan the orisont shene,
All eastward, as it was wont to done,
And Phcebus with his rosie carte sone,
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare.

This Pandare, that of all the day beforne
Ne might him comen this Troilus to se,
Although he on his hedde it had sworne,
For with the king Priam alday was he,
So that it lay nat in his liberte,
No where to gon, but on the morow he went
To Troilus, whan that he for him sent.

For in his herte he could well devine,
That Troilus al night for sorow woke,
And that he would tell him of his pine,
This knew he well inough without boke :

For which to chamber streight the way he toke,
And Troilus tho soberly he grette,
And on the bedde full sone he gan him sette.

“ My Pandarus,” (quod Troilus) “ the sorow
Which that I drie, I may not long endure,
I trowe I shall not liven till to morow,
For which I would alwaies on aventure
To thee devisen of my sepulture
The forme, and of my movable thou dispoen
Right as thee semeth best is for to doen.

“ But of the fire and flambe funerall,
In which my body brennen shall to glede,
And of the feast and plaies palestrall,
At my vigile, I pray thee take good hede
That that be well: and offer Mars my stede,
My sword, mine helme: and leve brother dere,
My shelde to Pallas yeve, that shineth clere.

“ The poudre in which min herte ybrend shal turn
That pray I thee thou take, and it conserve
In a vessell that men clepeth an urne
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it her, and doe me this pleasaunce,
To praien her to kepe it for a remembraunce.

“ For well I fele by my maladie,
And by my dreames, now and yore ago,
All certainly, that I mote nedes die:
The oule eke, which that hight Ascaphilo,
Hath after me shrigh, all these nightes two,
And god Mercurie, now of me wofull wretch
The soule guide, and whan thee list it fetch.”

Pandare answerde and saied, "Troilus,
My dere frende, as I have told thee yore,
That it is follie for to sorowen thus,
And causelesse, for which I can no more :
But who so woll not trowen rede ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedie,
But let him worchen with his fantasie.

"But, Troilus, I pray thee tell me now,
If that thou trowe er this that any wight,
Hath loved paramours as well as thou,
Ye, God wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his ladie gon a fourtenight,
And he nat yet made halvendele the fare,
What nede is the to maken all this care ?

"Sens day by day thou maist thy selven see
That from his love, or eles from his wife
A man mote twinnen of necessitie,
Ye though he love her as his owne life :
Yet nill he with himself thus maken strife,
For well thou wost, my leve brother dere,
That alway frendes may not been yfere.

"How done this folke, that seen hir loves wedded
By frendes might, as it betideth full oft,
And seen hem in hir spouses bedde ybedded ?
God wote they take it wisely faire and soft :
For why, good hope halt up hir herte aloft,
And for they can a time of sorow endure,
As time hem hurteth, a time doth hem cure.

"So shouldest thou endure, and letten slide
The time, and fonde to been glad and light,
Ten dayes n'is not so long to abide,
And sens she to comen thee hath behight,

She n'ill her hest broken for no wight,
For drede thee not, that she n'ill finde way
To come ayen, my life that durst I lay.

“Thy swevenes eke, and all such fantasie
Drive out, and let hem faren to mischaunce,
For they procede of thy melancolie,
That doth thee fele in slepe all this penaunce :
A straw for all swevenes signifiunce,
God helpe me so, I count hem not a bean,
There wot no man aright what dremes mean.

“For priestes of the temple tellen this,
That dreames been the revelacions
Of Goddes, and als well they tel ywis,
That they been infernalles illusions
And leches saine, that of complections
Proceden they of fast, or glotonie,
Who wot in sothe thus what they signifie ?

“Eke other saine, that through impressions,
As if a wight hath fast a thing in mind,
That thereof cometh soche avisions :
And other sain, as they in bokes find,
That after times of the yere by kind,
Men dreme, and that theeffect goth by the Mone,
But leve no dreme, for it is nat to done.

Wel worth of dreames aie these old wives,
And truly eke, augurie of these foules,
For feare of which, men wenen lese hir lives,
As ravens qualm, or schriching of these oules :
To trowen on it, bothe false and foule is,
Alas, alas, that so noble a creature
As is a man, should drede such ordure.

“For which with al mine herte I thee beseeche,
Unto thy self, that all this thou foryeve,
And rise now up, withouten more speche,
And let us cast how forth may best be driven
The time, and eke how freshly we may liven,
Whan she cometh, the which shall be right sone,
God helpe me so, the best is thus to done.

“Rise, let us speake of lustie life in Troy
That we have lad, and forth the time drive,
And eke of time coming us rejoy,
That bringen shall our blisse now to blive,
And langour of these wise daies five
We shall therewith so foryet or oppresse,
That well unneth it done shall us duressc.

“This toun is full of lordes al about,
And truce lasten all this meane while,
Go we plaien us in some lustie rout,
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a mile,
And thus thou shalt the time well beguile,
And drive it forth unto that blisfull morow,
That thou her see, that cause is of thy sorow.

“Now rise, my dere brother Troilus,
For certes it non honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bedde to rouken thus,
For truely of o thing trust to me,
If thou thus ligge, a day, two or three,
The folke woll wene, that thou for cowardise,
Thee faintest sick, and that thou darst not rise.”

This Troilus answerde: “O brother dere,
This folke know that have ysuffred pain,
That though he wepe, and make sorowful chere
That feeleth harme and smart in every vain,

No wonder is ; and though I ever plain
Or alway wepe, I am nothing to blame,
Sens that I have lost the cause of all my game.

“ But sens of fine force I mote arise,
I shall arise, as sone as ever I may,
And God, to whom mine herte I sacrifice,
So send us hastely the tenthe day :
For was there never foule so faine of May
As I shall ben, whan that she cometh in Troie,
That cause is of my tourment and my joie.

“ But whider is thy rede,” (quod Troilus)
“ That we may play us best in all this toun ?”
“ By God my counsaile is,” (quod Pandarus)
“ To ride and play us with king Sarpedoun.”
So long of this they spoken up and down,
Till Troilus gan at the last assent
To rise, and forth to Sarpedon they went.

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was ever his live, and full of hie prowessse,
With all that might yserved been on table,
That deintie was, all coste it great richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that such noblesse
As saiden both the most and eke the least,
Was never er that day wiste at any feast.

Nor in this world there is none instrument,
Delicious, through winde, or touche on corde,
As ferre as any wight hath ever ywent,
That tonge tell, or herte may recorde,
But at that feast, it was well heard recorde :
Ne of ladies eke so faire a companie,
On daunce er tho, was never yseen with eye.

But what availeth this to Troilus,
That for his sorrow, nothing of it rought,
But ever in one, as herte pitous,
Full busily Creseide his lady sought :
On her was ever al that his herte thought,
Now this, now that, so fast imagining,
That glad ywis can him no feasting.

These ladies eke, that at this feast been,
Sens that he saw his lady was away,
It was his sorow upon hem for to seen,
Or for to heare on instrumentes play :
For she that of his herte hath the kay,
Was absent, lo this was his fantasie
That no wight shulde maken melodie.

Nor there nas houre in al the day or night,
Whan he was ther as no man might him here,
That he ne sayd, " O lovesome lady bright,
How have ye faren sins that ye were there ?
Welcome ywis mine owne lady dere."
But welaway, all this n'as but a mase,
Fortune his hove entended bet to glase.

The letters eke, that she of olde time
Had him ysent, he would alone rede
An hundred sith, atwixt noone and prime,
Refiguring her shape, and her womanhede,
Within his herte, and every worde and dede
That passed was, and thus he drove to an end,
The fourth day, and saied he wol wend.

And said " Leve brother Pandarus.
Intendest thou that we shall here bleve,
Til Sarpedon woll forth conveyen us,
Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve :

For Goddes love, let us now sone at eve
Our leave take, and homeward let us turne,
For trewely I nill nat thus sojourne."

Pandare answerde, " Be we comen hither
To fetchen fire, and rennen home againe?
God helpe me so, I can nat tellen whither
We might gone, if I shall sothly saine:
There any wight is of us more faine
Than Sarpedon, and if we hence hie
Thus sodainly, I hold it vilanie.

" Whan that we saiden we would bleve
With him a weke, and now thus sodainly
The fourth day to take of him our leve,
He would wondren on it trewly:
Let us holden forth our purpose fermely,
And sens that ye behighten him to abide,
Hold forward now, and after let us ride."

This Pandarus, with all pine and wo
Made him to dwell, and at the wekes end,
Of Sarpedon they toke hir leave tho,
And on hir way they speden hem to wend:
(Quod Troilus) " Now Lorde me grace send,
That I may find at mine home comming,
Creseide comen," and therwith gan he sing.

" Ye haselwode," thought this Pandare,
And to himselfe ful softly he seide,
" God wotte refroiden may this hotte fare,
Er Calcas sende Troilus Creseide:"
But nathelesse he japed thus and seide,
And swore ywis, his herte him wel behight,
She wolde come as sone as ever she might.

Whan they unto the paleis were ycomen,
Of Troilus, they doun of horse alight,
And to the chambre hir way have they nomen,
And unto time that it gan to night,
They speken of Creseide the lady bright,
And after this, whan hem bothe lest,
They spede hem fro the supper unto rest.

On morow as sone as day began to clere,
This Troilus gan of his slepe to abreide,
And to Pandarus, his own brother dere,
“For love of God,” full pitously he seide :
“As go we seene the paleis of Creseide,
For sens we yet may have no more feest,
So let us seine her paleis at the leest.”

And therewithall his meine for to blende,
A cause he fonde in toun for to go,
And to Crescides house they gan wende,
But Lorde this sely Troilus was wo,
Him thought his sorowful herte brast atwo,
For when he saw her doores sparred all,
Well nigh for sorow adoun he gan to fall.

Therwith whan he was ware, and gan behold
How shet was every window of the place,
As frost him thought his herte gan to cold,
For which with changed deedly pale face,
Withouten worde, he forth by gan to pace,
And as God would, he gan so faste ride,
That no wight of his countenance aspide.

Than said he thus : “O paleis desolate,
O house of houses, whilom best yhlight,
O paleis empty and disconsolate,
O thou lanterne, of which queint is the light,

O paleis whilom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtest thou to fall, and I to die,
Sens she is went, that went was us to gie.

“ O paleis whilom crowne of houses all,
Enlumined with Sunne of alle blisse,
O ring, of which the rubie is out fall,
O cause of wo, that cause hast ben of blisse :
Yet sens I may no bet, fain would I kisse
Thy colde doores, durst I for this rout,
And farewel shrine of which the saint is out.”

Therwith he cast on Pandarus his eie,
With changed face, and pitous to behold,
And whan he might his time aright asprie,
Aie as he rode, to Pandarus he told
His new sorow, and eke his joyes old.
So pitously, and with so deed an hew,
That every wight might on his sorow rew.

Pro thence-forth he rideth up and doune,
And every thing came him to remembraunce,
As he rode forth by the places of the tounne,
In which he whilom had all his pleasaunce :
“ Lo, yonder saw I mine owne lady daunce,
And in that temple with her eien clere,
Me caught first my right lady dere.

“ And yonder have I herde full lustely
My dere herte laugh, and yonder play
Saw I her ones eke ful blisfully,
And yonder ones to me gan she say
‘ Now good sweete love me well I pray,’
And yonde so goodly gan she me behold,
That to the death mine herte is to her hold.

“ And at the corner in the yonder house,
Herde I mine alderlevest lady dere,
So womanly, with voice melodious,
Singen so wel, so goodly and so clere,
That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
The blisful sowne, and in that yonder place
My lady first me toke unto her grace.”

Than thought he thus, “ O blisful lord Cupide,
Whan I the processe have in memory,
How thou me hast weried on every side,
Men might a booke make of it like a story :
What nede is thee to seeke on me victory,
Sens I am thine, and holy at thy will,
What joy hast thou thine owne folke to spill ?

“ Wel hast thou, lord, ywroke on me thine ire,
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve,
Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
Thy grace most, of all lustes leve,
And live and die I wol in thy beleve,
For which I ne aske in guerdon but a boone,
That thou Creseide ayen me sende soone.

“ Distraigne her herte as fast to returne,
As thou doest mine to longen her to see,
Than wote I wel that she n'il nat sojourne :
Now blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Unto the blood of Troy, I praeie thee,
As Juno was unto the blode Thebane,
For which the folke of Thebes caught hir bane.”

And after this he to the yates went,
There as Creseide out rode, a full good paas,
And up and down there made he many a went
And to him selfe ful oft he said, “ Alas,

Fro hence rode my blisse and my solas,
As would blisful God now for his joie,
I might her sene ayen come to Troie.

“ And to the yonder hil I gan her guide,
Alas, and there I toke of her my leve,
And yonde I saw her to her father ride,
For sorow of which mine herte shal to cleve:
And hither home I come whan it was eve,
And here I dwell, out cast from all joie,
And shal, til I may sene her eft in Troie.”

And of him selfe imagined he oft,
To ben defaited, pale, and woxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men saiden soft,
“ What may it be? who can the sothe gesse,
Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?”
And al this n’as but his melancholie,
That he had of him selfe such fantasie.

Another time imagined he would,
That every wight that went by the wey,
Had of him routh, and that they saine should,
“ I am right sory, Troilus wol dey:”
And thus he drove a day yet forth or twey,
As ye have herde, such life gan he lede,
As he that stode betwixen hope and drede.

For which him liked in his songes shewe
Thencheson of his wo, as he best might,
And made a songe, of wordes but a few,
Somwhat his wofull herte for to light:
And whan he was from every mannes sight,
With softe voice, he of his lady dere,
That absent was, gan sing as ye may here.

“ O sterre, of which I lost have all the light,
With herte sore, wel ought I to bewaile,
That ever derke in turment, night by night
Toward my deth, with winde I stere and saile :
For which the tenth night, if that I faile,
The guiding of thy bemes bright an houre,
My ship and me Caribdes woll devoure.”

This song whan he thus songen had sone,
He fel ayen into his sighes old,
And every night, as was he wont to done,
He stode the bright Moone to behold :
And al his sorow he to the Moone told,
And said, “ Ywis whan thou art horned new,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trew.

“ I saw thine hornes old eke by that morow,
Whan hence rode my right lady dere,
That cause is of my turment and my sorow,
For whiche, O bright Lucina the clere,
For love of God ren fast about thy sphere,
For whan thine hornes newe ginnen spring,
Than shall she come that may my blisse bring.”

The day is more, and lenger every night
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho,
And that the Sunne went his course unright,
By lenger way than it was wont to go,
And said, “ Ywis, I drede me evermo
The Sunnes sonne Pheton be on live,
And that his fathers cart amisse he drive.”

Upon the walles fast eke would he walke,
And on the Greekes host he would see,
And to himselfe right thus he would talke :
“ Lo, yonder is mine owne lady free,

Or else yonder, there the tents bee,
And thence commeth this aire that is so soote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me boote.

“ And hardily, this wind that more and more
Thus stoundmeale encreaseth in my face,
Is of my ladies deepe sighes sore,
I preve it thus, for in none other space
Of all this toun, save only in this place,
Feele I no wind, that souneth so like paine,
It saith, “ Alas, why twined be we twaine.”

This longe time he driveth forth right thus,
Till fully passed was the ninthe night,
And aye beside him was this Pandarus,
That busily did all his full might
Him to comfort, and make his herte light,
Yeving him hope alway the tenth morow,
That she shal comen, and stinten all his sorow.

Upon that other side eke was Creseide
With women few among the Grekes strong,
For which full oft a day, “ Alas” she seide
“ That I was borne, well may mine herte long
After my death, for now live I too long
Alas, and I ne may it not amend,
For now is worse than ever yct I wend.

“ My father n’ill for nothing doe me grace
To gone ayen, for aught I can him queme,
And if so be that I my terme pace,
My Troilus shall in his herte deme
That I am false, and so it may well seme,
Thus shall I have unthonke on every side,
That I was borne so welaway the tide.

“ And if that I me put in jeopardie,
To steale away by night, and it befall
That I be caught, I shall be hold aspie,
Or else lo, this drede I most of all,
If in the honds of some wretch I fall,
I n’am but lost, all be mine herte trew :
Now mightie God, thou on my sorow rew.”

Full pale ywoxen was her bright face,
Her limmes leane, as she that all the day
Stode whan she durst, and loked on the place
There she was borne, and dwelt had aye,
And all the night weeping alas she lay,
And thus dispeired out of all cure
She lad her life, this wofull creature.

Full oft a day she sighed eke for distresse,
And in her selfe she went aye purtraying
Of Troilus the great worthinesse,
And all his goodly wordes recording,
Sens first that day her love began to spring,
And thus she set her wofull herte afire,
Through remembrance of that she gan desire.

In all this world there n’is so cruell herte,
That her had heard complainen in her sorow,
That n’old have wepten for her paines smart,
So tenderly she wept, both eve and morow,
Her needed no teares, for to borow,
And this was yet the worst of all her paine,
Ther was no wight, to whom she durste plain.

Full rewfully she looked upon Troy,
Beheld the toures high, and eke the hallis,
“ Alas,” (quod she) “ the pleasaunce and the joy,
The which that now all turned into gall is,

Have I had ofte within yonder wallis.
O Troilus, what doest thou now?" she seide,
"Lord, whether thou yet thinke upon Creseide.

"Alas that I ne had ytrowed on your lore,
And went with you, as ye me redde ere this,
Than had I now not sighed halfe so sore:
Who might have said, that I had done amis
To steale away with such one as he is?
But all too late commeth the lectuarie,
Whan men the corse unto the grave carie.

"Too late is now to speke of that matere,
Prudence, alas, one of thine eyen three
Me lacked alway, ere that I came here:
For on time passed well remembred mee,
And present time eke could I well see,
But future time, ere I was in the snare,
Could I not seene, that causeth now my care.

"But nathelesse, betide what betide,
I shall to morow at night, by east or west,
Out of this hoast steale, on some side,
And gone with Troilus, where as him lest,
This purpose woll I hold, and this is the best,
No force of wicked tongues jonglerie,
For ever on love have wretches had envie.

"For who so woll of every word take hede,
Or rule hem by every wightes wit,
Ne shall he never thriven out of drede,
For that that some men blamen ever yet,
Lo, other manner folke commenden it,
And as for me, for all such variaunce,
Felicite clepe I my suffisaunce.

“ For which, withouten any wordes mo,
To Troy I woll, as for conclusioun.”
But God it wote, ere fully moneths two,
She was full ferre fro that ententioun,
For bothe Troilus and Troie toun
Shall knotlesse throughout her herte slide,
For she woll take a purpose for to abide.

This Diomedes, of whom I you tell gan,
Goth now within himselfe aye arguing,
With all the sleight and all that ever he can,
How he may best with shortest tarying,
Into his nette Creseides herte bring,
To this entent he couthe never fine,
To fishen her, he laid out hooke and line.

But nathelesse, well in his herte he thought,
That she nas nat without a love in Troy,
For never sithen he her thence brought,
Ne couth he seene her laugh, or maken joy,
He n’ist how best her herte for t’acoie,
But for t’assay, he said nought it ne greveth,
For he that naught assaieth, naught atcheveth.

Yet saied he to himselfe upon a night,
“ Now am I nat a foole, that wote well how
Her wo is, for love of another wight,
And hereupon to gone assay her now,
I may well wete, it n’ill nat ben my prow,
For wise folke in bookes it expresse,
Men shall nat wowe a wight in hevinesse.

“ But who so might winnen such a floure
Fro him, for whom she mourneth night and day,
He might saine he were a conquerour :
And right anone, as he that bold was aye,

Thought in his herte, hap how hap may,
All should I dye, I woll her herte seech,
I shall no more lesen but my speech."

This Diomede, as bookes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and courageous,
With sterne voice, and mighty limmes square,
Hardy, testife, strong, and chevalrous
Of deedes like his father Tideus,
And some men saine he was of tonge large,
And heire he was of Calcidony and Arge.

Creseide meane was of her stature,
Thereto of shape, of face, and eke of chere,
There might ben no fairer creature,
And ofte time this was her manere,
To gone ytressed with her haires clere
Downe by her colere, at her backe behind,
Which with a threde of gold she would bind.

And save her browes joyneden yfere,
There nas no lacke, in aught I can espien,
But for to spoken of her eyen clere,
Lo, truely they written that her seien,
That Paradis stood formed in her eien,
And with her riche beauty evermore
Strove love in her, aie which of hem was more.

She sobre was, eke simple, and wise withall,
The best ynorished eke that might bee,
And goodly of her speech in generall,
Charitable, estately, lusty, and free,
Ne nevermore, ne lacked her pitee,
Tender hearted, sliding of corage,
But truely I can nat tell her age.

And Troilus well woxen was in hight,
And complete formed by proportioun,
So well that Kind it naught amenden might,
Young, fresh, strong, and hardy as lioun,
Trew as steele, in ech condition,
One of the best enteched creature,
That is or shall, while that the world may dure.

And certainly, in story as it is foud,
That Troilus was never unto no wight
As in his time, in no degree second,
In daring do that longeth to a knight,
All might a giaunt passen him of might,
His herte aye with the first and with the best,
Stood peregall to dare done what him lest.

But for to tellen forth of Diomede,
It fell, that after on the tenth day,
Sens that Creseide out of the city yede,
This Diomede, as fresh as braunch in May,
Came to the tente there as Calcas lay,
And fained him with Calcas have to done,
But what he ment, I shall you tellen sone.

Creseide at shorte wordes for to tell,
Welcommed him, and downe him by her sette
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwell,
And after this, withouten longe lette,
The spices and the wine men forth hem fette,
And forth they speke of this and that yfere,
As friendes done, of which some shall ye here.

He gan first fallen of the warre in speech
Betwixen hem and the folke of Troy toun,
And of th'assiege he gan eke her beseech,
To tellen him what was her opinioun :

Fro that demaund he so discendeth doun,
To asken her, if that her straunge thought
The Greekes gise, and werkes that they wrought?

And why her father tarieth so long
To wedden her unto some worthy wight?
Creseide that was in her paines strong,
For love of Troilus her owne knight,
So ferforth as she cunning had or might,
Answerde him tho, but as of his entent,
It seemed nat she wiste what he ment.

But nathelesse, this ilke Diomede
Gan on himselfe assure, and thus he seide:
“ If I aright have taken on you hede,
Methinketh thus, O lady mine Creseide,
That sens I first hond on your bridle leide,
Whan I out came of Troy by the morrow,
Ne might I never seene you but in sorrow.

“ I can nat saine what may the cause be,
But if for love of some Trojan it were,
The which right sore would a thinken me,
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there,
Shoulden spill a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously your selven so begile,
For dredelesse it is nat worth the while.

“ The folke of Troy, as who saith all and some,
In prison ben, as ye your selven see,
Fro thence shall nat one on live come,
For all the gold atwixen sunne and sec,
Trusteth well, and understondeth mee,
There shall nat one to mercy gone on live,
All were he lord of worldes twise five.

“Such wrech on hem for fetching of Heleine
There shall be take, ere that we hence wend,
That Maunes, which that goddes ben of peine,
Shall ben agast that Grekes wol hem shend,
And men shall drede unto the worldes end
From henceforth to ravishen any queene,
So cruell shall our wrecche on hem be scene.

“And but if Calcas lede us with ambages,
That is to saine, with double wordes slie,
Such as men clepen a word with two visages,
Ye shall well knowen that I nat ne lie,
And all this thing right sene it with your cie,
And that anon, ye nill nat trow how soone,
Now taketh hede, for it is for to doone.

“What wene ye your wise father would
Have yeven Antenor for you anone,
If he ne wiste that the city should
Destroied ben? why nay so mote I gone,
He knew full well there shall nat scapen one
That Troian is, and for the greате fere
He durste nat that ye dwelt lenger there.

“What woll ye more, O lovesome lady dere,
Let Troy and Troians fro your herte passe,
Drive out that bitter hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayen the beautie of your face,
That ye with salte teares so deface,
For Troy is brought in such a jeopardie,
That it to save is now no remedie.

“And thinketh well, ye shall in Grekes find
A more perfite love, ere it be night,
Than any Troian is, and more kind,
And bet to serven you woll done his might,

And if ye vouchsafe my lady bright,
I woll ben he, to serven you my selve,
Ye lever than be lord of Greces twelve."

And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
And in his speech a little while he quoke,
And cast aside a little with his heed,
And stint a while, and afterward he woke,
And soberly on her he threw his loke,
And said, "I am, albeit to you no joy,
As gentill a man as any wight in Troy.

"For if my father Tideus" (he seide)
"Ylived had, I had been ere this,
Of Calcedonie and Arge a king, Creseide,
And so hope I that I shall be ywis:
But he was slaine alas, the more harme is,
Unhappily at Thebes all to rathe,
Polimite, and many a man to scathe.

"But herte mine, sithe that I am your man,
And ben the first, of whom I seche grace,
To serve you as heartely as I can,
And ever shall, while I to live have space,
So that, ere I depart out of this place,
Ye woll me graunte, that I may to morow
At better leiser tell you of my sorow."

What shuld I tell his wordes that he seide?
He spake ynough for o day at the mest
It preveth well he spake so, that Creseide
Graunted on the morrow at his request
For to speake with him at the least,
So that he n'olde speake of such matere,
And thus she to him said, as ye mowe here.

As she that had her herte on Troilus
So fast, that there may it none arace,
And straungely she spake, and saied thus :
“ O Diomed, I love that ilke place
There was I borne, and Joves of thy grace
Deliver it soone of all that doth it care,
God for thy might so leve it well to fare.

“ That Grekes wold hir wrath on Troie wreke
If that they might, I know it well ywis,
But it shall naught befallen as ye speke,
And God toforne, and farther over this,
I wote my father wise and ready is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me told,
So dere am I the more unto him hold.

“ That Grekes ben of high conditionn,
I wote eke well, but certaine men shall find
As worthie folke within Troie toun,
As conning, as perfite, and as kinde,
As ben betwixte Orcades and Inde,
And that ye could well your lady serve
I trow eke well, her thouke for to deserve.

“ But as to speake of love, ywis” (she seide)
“ I had a lord, to whom I wedded was,
His whose mine herte was all till he deide,
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
There in mine herte a’is, ne never was,
And that ye ben of noble and high kinrede,
I have well herde it tellen out of drede.

“ And that doth me to have so great a wonder,
That ye wold scornen any woman so,
Eke God wote, love and I ben fer asonder,
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,

Unto my death plaine and make wo ;
What I shall after done, I can not say,
But truely as yet me list nat play.

“ Mine herte is now in tribulation,
And ye in armes busie day by day,
Hereafter whan ye wonen have the toun,
Paraventure than, so it happen may,
That whan I see that I never ere sey,
Than woll I werke that I never ere wrought,
This word to you ynough suffisen ought.

“ To morow eke wol I speken with you faine,
So that ye touchen naught of this matere,
And whan you list, ye may come here againe,
And ere ye gone, thus much I say you here,
As helpe me Pallas, with her haires clere,
If that I should of any Greeke have routh,
It shulde be your selven by my trouth.

“ I say nat therefore that I woll you love,
Ne say nat nay, but in conclusioun,
I meane well by God that sit above :”
And therewithall she cast her eien down,
And gan to sigh, and said, “ Troilus and Troy toun
Yet bidde I God, in quiet and in rest
I may you seene, or do mine herte brest.”

But in effect, and shortly for to say,
This Diomede all freshly new againe
Gan preasen on, and fast her mercy pray,
And after this, the soothe for to saine,
Her glove he toke, of which he was full faine,
And finally, whan it was woxen eve,
And all was well, he rose and tooke his leve.

The bright Venus folowed and aie taught
The way there brode Phebus doune alight,
And Cithera her chare horse over raught,
To whirle out of the Lion, if she might,
And Signifer his candles sheweth bright,
Whan that Creseide unto her bed went,
Within her fathers faire bright tent.

Retourning in her soule aye up and doun
The wordes of this suddaine Diomede,
His great estate, and perill of the toun,
And that she was alone, and had nede
Of friendes help, and thus began to brede
The cause why, the soothe for to tell,
She tooke fully purpose for to dwell.

The morow came, and ghostly for to speke,
This Diomede is come unto Creseide,
And shortly, least that ye my tale breke,
So well he for himselfe spake and seide,
That all her sighes sore doune he leide,
And finally, the soothe for to saine,
He refte her the great of all her paine.

And after this, the story telleth us,
That she him yave the faire bay stede,
The which she ones wan of Troilus,
And eke a brooch (and that was little nede)
That Troilus' was, she yave this Diomede,
And eke the bet from sorow him to releve,
She made him weare a pencell of her sleve.

I find eke in stories elsewhere,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho wept she many a tere,
Whan that she saw his wide woundes blede,

And that she tooke to kepen him good hede,
And for to healen him of his smart,
Men saine, I n'ot, that she yave him her herte.

But truely the storie telleth us,
There made never woman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus,
She said "Alas, for now is clene ago
My name in trouth of love for evermo,
For I have falsed one the gentillest
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

"Alas, of me unto the worldes end
Shall neither ben ywritten or ysong
No good worde, for these bokes woll me shend :
Yrolled shall I been on many a tong,
Throughout the world my bell shall be rong,
And women most woll hate me of all,
Alas, that such a caas me should fall.

"They woll saine, in as much as in me is,
I have hem done dishonour welaway,
All be I not the first that did amis,
What helpeth that, to done my blame away,
But sens I see there is no better way,
And that too late is now for me to rue,
To Diomedé I woll algate be true.

"But, Troilus, sens I no better may,
And sens that thus departen ye and I,
Yet pray I God so yeve you right good day,
As for the gentillest knight truely
That ever I saw, to serven faithfully,
And best can aye his ladies honour kepe,"
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

“ And certes, you ne haten shall I never,
And friendes love, that shall ye have of me,
And my good word, all should I liven ever,
And truely I would right sorrie be,
For to seene you in adversite,
And guiltlesse I wot well I you leave,
And all shall passe, and thus take I my leave.”

But truely how long it was bitwene,
That she forsoke him for this Diomedé,
There is none authour telleth it I wene,
Take every man now to his bookes hede,
He shall no terme finden, out of drede,
For though that he began to wowe her sone,
Ere he her wan, yet was there more to done.

Ne me ne list this selie woman chide
Ferther than the storie woll devise,
Her name alas is published so wide,
That for her gilt it ought ynough suffise,
And if I might excuse her in any wise,
For she so sorrie was for her untrouth,
Ywis I would excuse her yet for routh.

This Troilus, as I before have told,
Thus driveth forth, as wel as he hath might,
But ofte was his herte hote and cold,
And namely that ilke ninthe night,
Which on the morrow she had him behight
To come ayen, God wote full little rest
Had he that night, nothing to slepe him lest.

The laurer crowned Phebus, with his heat
Gan in his course aie upward as he went,
To warmen of the east sea the waves wete,
And Circes doughter song, with fresh entent.

Whan Troilus his Pandare after sent,
And on the walles of the towne they pleide,
To looke, if they can seene ought of Creseide.

Till it was noone, they stooden for to see
Who that there came, and every maner wight
That came fro ferre, they saiden it was shee,
Till that they coulden knowen him aright:
Now was his herte dull, now was it light,
And thus bejaped stooden for to stare
About naught, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seide
“ For aught I wot, before noone sikerly,
Into this toune ne cometh not here Creseide,
She hath ynough to doen hardely
To winnen from her father, so trow I,
Her olde father woll yet make her dine
Ere that she go, God yeve his herte pine.”

Pandarus answerd, “ It may well been certain
And forthy let us dine, I thee beseech,
And after noone than maist thou come again :”
And home they go, without more speech,
And comen ayen, but long may they seech,
Ere that they finde that they after gape,
Fortune hem bothe thinketh for to jape.

(Quod Troilus) “ I see well now that she
Is taried with her old father so,
That ere she come, it woll nigh even be.
Come forth, I woll unto the yate go,
These porters ben unkonning evermo,
And I woll done hem holden up the yate,
As naught ne were, although she come late.”

The day goth fast, and after that came eve,
And yet came nat to Troilus Creseide,
He looketh forth by hedge, by tree, by greve,
And ferre his head over the wall he leide,
And at the last he tourned him, and seide,
“By God I wote her meaning now Pandare,
Almost ywis all newe was my care.

“Now doubtlesse this lady can her good,
I wote she commeth riding prively,
I commend her wisdom by mine hood,
She woll nat maken people nicely
Gaure on her whan she commeth, but softly
By night into the toun she thinketh ride,
And, dere brother, thinke nat long to abide,

“We have naught else for to done ywis,
And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowen me,
Have here my trouth, I see her, yond she is,
Heave up thine eyen man, mayst thou nat see?”
Pandare answerde, “Nay, so mote I the,
Al wrong by God, what saist thou man, wher art,
That I see yonde afaire, n’is but a cart.”

“Alas thou sayst right sooth,” (quod Troilus)
“But hardely it is not all for nought,
That in mine herte I now rejoyce thus,
It is ayenst some good, I have a thought,
Not I nat how, but sens that I was wrought,
Ne felt I such a comfort dare I say,
She cometh to night, my life that durst I lay.”

Pandarus answerde, “It may be well ynough,”
And held with him of all that ever he saied,
But in his herte he thought, and soft he lough,
And to himselfe full soberly he saied,

“ From hasell wood, there jolly Robin plaied,
Shall come all that thou abidest here,
Ye, farwell all the snow of ferne yere.”

The wardein of the yates gan to call
The folk, which that without the yates were,
And bad hem driven in hir beastes all,
Or all the night they must bleven there,
And ferre within the night, with many a tere,
This Troilus gan homeward for to ride,
For well he seeth it helpeth nat to abide.

But nathelesse, he gladded him in this,
He thought he misacompted had his day,
And saied, “ I understand have all amis,
For thilke night I last Crescide sey,
She sayd, ‘ I shall ben here, if that I may,
Ere that the Moone, O dere herte swete,
The Lion passe out of this Ariete.’

“ For which she may yet hold all her behest,”
And on the morrow unto the yate he went,
And up and doun, by west and eke by east
Upon the walles made he many a went,
But all for naught, his hope alway him blent,
For which at night, in sorow and sighe sore,
He went him home, withouten any more.

This hope all cleane out of his herte fled,
He ne hath whereon now lenger for to hong,
But for the paine him thought his herte bled,
So were his throwes sharp, and wonder strong,
For whan he saw that she abode so long,
He n’ist what he judgen of it might,
Sens she hath broken that she him behight.

The thirde, fourth, fifte, and sixt day
After tho dayes tenne, of which I told,
Betwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somewhat trusting on her hestes old,
But whan he saw she n'olde her terme hold,
He can now seene none other remedie,
But for to shape him soone for to die.

Therwith the wicked spirit, God us blesse,
Which that men clepen woode jealousie,
Gan in him crepe, in all this hevinesse,
For which because he would soone die,
He ne eat ne dronke for his melancholic,
And eke from every company he fled,
This was the life that all this time he led.

He so defaite was, that no manner man,
Unneth he might knowen there he went,
So was he leane, and thereto pale and wan,
And feeble, that he walketh by potent,
And with his ire he thus himselfe shent :
But who so asked him whereof him smart,
He sayd, his harme was all about his herte.

Priam full oft, and eke his mother dere,
His bretherne and his sustren gan him frain
Why he so sorrowfull was in all his chere,
And what thing was the cause of all his pain?
But all for naught, he n'olde his cause plain,
But sayd, he felt a grievous maladie
About his herte, and faine he would die.

So on a day he laid him down to slepe,
And so befell, that in slepe him thought,
That in a forrest fast he walked to wepe
For love of her that him these paines wrought,

And up and doune as he that forrest sought,
He met he saw a bore, with tuskes great,
That slept ayenst the bright Sunnes heat.

And by this bore, fast in her armes fold
Lay kissing aye his lady bright Creseide,
For sorrow of which, whan he it gan behold,
And for dispite, out of his slepe he breide,
And loude he cried on Pandarus, and seide,
“O Pandarus, now know I crop and root,
I n’am but dead, there n’is none other boot.

“My lady bright Creseide hath me betraied,
In whom I trusted most of any wight,
She elsewhere hath now her herte apaid,
The blisfull goddes, through hir greate might,
Have in my dreame yshewed it full right,
Thus in my dreame Creseide have I behold,”
And all this thing to Pandarus he told.

“O my Creseide, alas, what subtelte?
What newe lust? what beauty? what science?
What wrath of juste cause have ye to me?
What guilt of me? what fell experience
Hath me rafte alas thine advertence?
O trust, O faith, O depe assuraunce,
Who hath me raft Creseide, all my pleasaunce?

“Alas, why let I you from hence go?
For which well nigh out of my wit I breide,
Who shall now trow on any othes mo?
God wote I wend, O lady bright Creseide,
That every word was gospell that ye seide,
But who may bet beguile, if him list,
Than he on whom men wenen best to trist?

“What shall I done, my Pandarus, alas?
I fele now so sharpe a newe paine,
Sens that there is no remedy in this caas,
That bet were it I with mine hondes twaine
My selven slow than alway thus to plaine,
For through the death my wo shuld have an end,
There every day with life my self I shend.”

Pandare answerde and said, “Alas the while
That I was borne, have I nat saied er this,
That dreames many a manner man beguile?
And why? For folke expounden hem amis:
How darest thou saine that false thy lady is,
For any dreame, right for thine own drede,
Let be this thought, thou canst no dreames rede.

“Peraventure there thou dremest of this bore,
It may so be that it may signifie
Her father, which that old is and eke hore,
Ayen the sunne lieth on point to die,
And she for sorow ginneth wepe and erie,
And kisseth him, there he lieth on the ground,
Thus shuldest thou thy dreame aright expound.”

“How might I then doen” (quod Troilus)
“To know of this, yea were never so lite?”
“Now sayst thou wisely” (quod this Pandarus)
“My rede is this, sens thou canst well endite,
That hastily a letter thou her write,
Through which thou shalt well bringen about
To know a sooth of that thou art in dout.

“And see now why: for this dare I well sain,
That if so is, that she untrue be,
I cannot trowen that she woll write again,
And if she write, thou shalt full sone ysee,

As whether she hath any liberte
To come ayen, or els in some clause
If she be let, she woll assigne a cause.

“Thou hast not written to her sens she went,
Nor she to thee, and this I durst lay,
There may such cause ben in her entent,
That hardly thou wolt thy selven say,
That her abode the best is for you tway :
Now write her than, and thou shalt fele sone
A sooth of all, there is no more to done.”

Accorded ben to this conclusioun,
And that anon, these ilke lords two,
And hastely sate Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte too and fro,
How he may best descriven her his wo,
And to Creseide his owne lady dere,
He wrote right thus, and said as ye may here.

THE COPY OF THE LETTER.

“RIGHT fresh flour, whose I have ben and shall,
Withouten part of elsewhere servise,
With herte, body, life, lust, thought, and all,
I wofull wight in every humble wise
That tong can tell, or herte may devise,
As oft as matter occupieth place,
Me recommaund unto your noble grace.

“Liketh it you to weten, sweete herte,
As ye well know, how long time agon
That ye me left in aspre paines smart,
Whan that ye went, of which yet bote non
Have I non had, but ever worse bigon,
Fro day to day am I, and so mote dwell,
While it you list, of wele and wo my well.

“For which to you, with dredefull herte trew,
I write (as he that sorow driveth to write)
My wo, that every houre encreaseth new,
Complaining as I dare, or can endite,
And that defaced is, that may ye wite,
The teares, which that from mine eyen rain,
That wulden speke, if that they durst, and plain.

“You first beseech I, that your eyen clere
To looke on this defouled ye nat hold :
And over all this, that ye, my lady dere,
Woll vouchsafe this letter to behold,
And by the cause eke of my cares cold,
That slaeth my wit, if aught amis me start.
Foryeve it me, mine owne sweete herte.

“If any servaunt durst or ought of right
Upon his lady pitously complaine,
Than wene I that I ought to be that wight,
Considred this, that ye these moneths twaine
Have taried, there ye saiden sooth to saine,
But tenne daies ye nolde in hoste sojourne,
But in two moneths yet ye not retourne.

“But for as much as me mote nedes like
All that you list, I dare nat plaine more,
But humbly, with sorowfull sighes sike,
You right I mine unrestie sorowes sore,
Fro day to day, desiring evermore
To knowen fully, if your will it were,
How ye have fared and don while ye be there.

“Whose welfare and heale eke God encrease
In honour such, that upward in degree
It grow alway, so that it never cease,
Right as your herte aye can, my lady free,

Devise, I pray to God so mote it be,
And graunt it, that you soone upon me rew,
As wisely as in all I am to you trew.

“ And if you liketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whose wo ther may no wight discribe,
I can no more, but chest of every care,
At writing of this letter I was on live,
All redy out my wofull ghost to drive,
Which I delay, and hold him yet in hond,
Upon the sight of matter of your sond.

“ Mine eyen two, in vaine with which I see,
Of sorowfull teres salt arn woxen wellis,
My song in plaint of mine adversite,
My good in harm, mine ease eke woxen Hell is,
My joy in wo, I can sey now nought ellis,
But tourned is, for which my life I warie,
Every joy or ease in his contrarie.

“ Which with you coming home ayen to Troy
Ye may redresse, and more a thousand sithe,
Than ever I had encreasen in me joy,
For was there never herte yet so blithe
To save his life, as I shall ben as swithe
As I you see, and though no manner routh
Can meven you, yet thinketh on your trouth.

“ And if so be my gilt hath death deserved,
Or if you list no more upon me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Beseech I you, mine owne lady free,
That hereupon ye woulde write me
For love of God, my right lodesterre,
That death may make an end of al my werre.

“If other cause aught doth you for to dwell,
That with your letter ye may me recomfort,
For though to me your absence is an Hell,
With patience I woll my wo comfort,
And with your letter of hope I woll disport :
Now writeth, swete, and let me thus nat plaine,
With hope or deathe delivereth me fro paine.

“Ywis, mine owne dere herte trew,
I wote that whan ye next upon me see,
So lost have I mine heale and eke mine hew,
Creseide shall not conne knowen me,
Ywis, mine hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth aye mine herte to behold
Your beautie, that unneth my life I hold.

“I say no more, all have I for to sey
To you well more than I tell may,
But whether that ye do me live or dey,
Yet pray I God so yeve you right good day,
And fareth well, goodly faire fresh May,
As ye that life or death me may commaund,
And to your trouth aye I me recommaund.

“With heale such, that but ye yeven me
The same heale, I shall none heale have,
In you lieth, whan you list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shall my grave,
And in you my life, in you might for to save
Me fro disease of all my paines smart,
And fare now well, mine owne sweet herte.

“Le vostre T.”

This letter forth was sent unto Creseide,
Of which her answeere in effect was this,
Full pitously she wrote ayen, and seide,

That all so soone as she might ywis,
She would come, and amend all that was amis,
And finally, she wrote and saied than,
She would come, ye, but she nist whan.

But in her letter made she such feasts,
That wonder was, and swore she loved him best,
Of which he found but bottomlesse bilhests.
But Troilus thou mayst now east and west
Pipe in an ivie leafe, if that thee lest:
Thus goth the world, God shilde us from mischaunce,
And every wight that meaneth trouth avaunce.

Encreasen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for tarying of Crescide,
And lessen gan his hope and eke his might,
For which all doun he in his bedde him leide,
He ne eat, dronke, ne slept, ne worde seide,
Imagining aye that she was unkind,
Fer which wel nigh he wext out of his mind.

This dreame, of which I told have eke beforne,
May never come out of his remembraunce,
He thought aye well he had his lady lorne,
And that Joves, of his purveyaunce,
Him shewed had in sleepe the signifiarence
Of her untrouth, and his disaventure,
And that the bore was shewed him in figure.

For which he for Sibilie his suster sent,
That called was Cassandre eke all about,
And all his dreame he told her ere he stent,
And her besought assoilen him the dout
Of the strong bore, with tuskes stout,
And finally, within a little stound,
Cassandre him gan thus his dreame expound.

She gan first smile, and said, “ O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this desirest to know,
Thou must a fewe of old stories here,
To purpose how that fortune overthrow
Hath lordes old, through which within a throw
Thou shalt this bore know, and of what kind
He comen is, as men in bookes find.

“ Diane, which that wroth was and in ire,
For Greekes n’olde done her sacrifice,
Ne incens upon her altar set on fire,
She for that Greekes gon her so dispise,
Wrake her in a wonder cruell wise,
For with a bore as great as oxe in stall,
She made up frete her corne and vines all.

“ To slee the bore was all the country raised,
Emong whiche there came this bore to se
A maid, one of this world the best ypraised,
And Meleager, lord of that countre :
He loved so this freshe maiden free,
That with his manhood, ere he would stent,
This bore he slough, and her the hed he sent.

“ Of whiche, as old bookes tellen us,
There rose a conteke and a great envie,
And of this lord descended Tideus
By line, or els old bookes lie :
But how this Meleager gan to die
Through his mother, woll I you not tell,
For all too long it were for to dwell,”

She told eke how Tideus, ere she stent,
Unto the strong citie of Thebes
(To claimen kingdome of the citie) went
For his fellawe dan Polimites,

Of which the brother dan Ethiocles
Full wrongfully of Thebes held the strength.
This told she by processe all by length.

She told eke how Hemonides astart,
When Tideus slough fiftie knightes stout,
She told eke all the prophesies by herte,
And how that seven kinges with hir rout
Besiegeden the citie all about,
And of the holy serpent, and the well,
And of the furies all she gan him tell.

*Associat profugus Tideus primo Polynicem,
Tidea ligatum docet insidiasque secundo,
Tertius Hemoniden canit, et ratem latitantem,
Quartus habet reges incuntes prælia septem,
Lemniadum furie quinto narrantur et anguis,
Archemori bustum sexto ludique sequuntur.
Dat Thebis ratem Graiorum septimus umbris,
Octaro cecidit Tideus, spes, rita Pelasgum,
Hippomedon nono moritur cum Parthenopeo,
Fulmine percussus decimo Capaneus superatur,
Undecimo perimunt sese per vulnera fratres,
Argivum flentem, narrat duodenus et ignem.*

Of Archimories burying, and the plaies,
And how Amphiorax fill through the ground,
How Tideus was slaine, lord of Argeis,
And how Hippomedon in a little stound
Was dreint, and dead Parthenope of wound,
And also how Campaneus the proud
With thunder dint was slaine, that cried loud.

She gan eke tell him how that either brother
Ethiocles and Polinices also
At a scarmishe eche of them slouth other,

And of Argives weeping and her mo,
And how the toun was brent she told eke tho,
And tho discended down from gestes old
To Diomede, and thus she spake and told.

“This ilke bore betokeneth Diomede,
Tideus son, that doun descended is
Fro Meleager, that made the bore to blede,
And thy lady, where so she be ywis,
This Diomede her herte hath, and she is his :
Weep if thou wolt, or leave, for out of dout
This Diomede is in, and thou art out.”

“Thou sayst not sooth,” (quod he) “thou sor-
With all thy false ghost of prophecie, [ceresse,
Thou wenest been a great devineresse,
Now seest thou nat this foole of fantasie,
Painen her on ladies for to lie,
Away,” (quod he) “there Joves yeve the sorow,
That shalt be fals peraventure yet to morow.

“As well thou mightest lien on good Alceste,
That was of creatures (but men lie)
That ever weren, kindest, and the best,
For whan her husbond was in jeopardie
To die himselfe, but if she would die,
She chese for him to die, and gon to Hell,
And starfe anon, as us the bookes tell.”

Cassandre goeth, and he with cruell herte
Foryate his wo, for anger of his speech,
And fro his bedde all suddainly he start,
As though a hole him had ymade a leech,
And day by day he gan require and seech
A sooth of this, with all his full cure,
And thus he driveth forth his aventure.

Fortune which that permutation
Of all things hath, as it is her committed,
Through purveyaunce and disposition
Of high Jove, as reignes shall ben flitted
Fro folk to folk, or whan they shal ben smitted,
Gan pull away the feathers bright of Troy
Fro day to day till they ben bare of joy.

Emong all this, the fine of the jeopardie
Of Hector gan approchen wonder blive,
The fate would his soule should unbodie,
And shapen had a meane it out to drive,
Ayenst which fate him helpeth not to strive,
But on a day to fighten gan he wend,
At which alas, he caught his lives end.

For which me thinketh every manner wight
That haunteth armes, ought to bewaile
The death of him that was so noble a knight :
For as he drough a king by th'aventaile
Unware of this, Achilles through the maile
And through the bodie gan him for to rive,
And thus the worthy knight was rest of live.

For whom, as old bookes tellen us,
Was made such wo, that tong it may nat tell,
And namely, the sorow of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse the well,
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwell,
That what for sorow, love, and for unrest,
Full oft a day he bad his herte brest.

But nathelesse, tho he gon him dispaire,
And drede aye that his lady was untrue,
Yet aye on her his herte gan repaire,
And as these lovers done, he sought aye new

To get ayen Creseide bright of hew,
And in his herte he went her excusing,
That Calcas caused all her tarying.

And oft time he was in purpose great,
Himselven like a pilgrime to disguise,
To seene her, but he may not counterfeat,
To ben unknowen of folke that weren wise,
Ne find excuse aright that may suffise,
If he among the Grekes knowen were,
For which he wept full oft many a tere.

To her he wrote yet oft time all new,
Full pitously, he left it nat for slouth,
Beseeching her, sens that he was true,
That she wol come ayen, and hold her trouth,
For which Creseide upon a day for routh,
I take it so, touching all this matere,
Wrote him ayen, and said as ye may here.

“Cupides sonne, ensample of goodlihede,
O swerde of knighthood, sours of gentillesse,
How might a wight in turment and in drede,
And healelesse, you send as yet gladnesse,
I hertelesse, I sicke, I in distresse,
Sens ye with me, nor I with you may deale,
You neither send I herte may nor heale.

“Your letters full the paper all iplainted,
Conceived hath mine hertes pite,
I have eke seene with teares all depainted,
Your letter, and how that ye requiren me
To come ayen, which yet ne may not be,
But why, least that this letter founden were,
No mention ne make I now for fere.

“Grevous to me (God wote) is your unrest,
Your hast, and that the Goddes ordinaunce
It seemeth nat ye take it for the best,
Nor other thing n’is in your remembraunce,
As thinketh me, but only your pleasaunce,
But beth not wroth, and that I you beseech,
For that I tary is all for wicked speech.

“For I have heard well more than I wend
Touching us two, how thinges have ystond,
Which I shall with dissimuling amend,
And beth nat wroth, I have eke understand,
How ye ne do but holden me in hond,
But now no force, I can nat in you gesse,
But all trouth and all gentilnesse.

“Come I woll, but yet in such disjoint
I stond as now, that what yere or what day
That this shall be, that can I nat appoint,
But in effect I pray you as I may
Of your good word, and of your friendship aye,
For truly while that my life may dure,
As for a friend ye may in me assure.

“Yet pray I you, no evill ye ne take
That it is short which that I to you write,
I dare nat there I am well letters make,
Ne never yet ne could I well endite,
Eke great effect, men write in place lite,
Th’entent is all, and nat the letters space,
And fareth well, God have you in his grace.

“La vostre C.”

This Troilus thought this letter all straunge
Whan he it saw, and sorowfully he sight,
Him thought it like a kalends of eschaunge,

But finally he full ne trowen might,
That she ne would him holden that she hight,
For with ful evell will list him to leve,
That loveth well in such case, though him greve.

But nathelesse, men saine that at the last,
For any thing, men shall the soothe see,
And such a case betide, and that as fast,
That Troilus well understood that she
N'as nat so kind as that her ought to be,
And finally, he wote now out of dout,
That all is lost that he hath ben about.

Stood on a day in his melancholy
This Troilus, and in suspectioun
Of her, for whom he wend to dye,
And so befell, that throughout Troie toun,
As was the guise, yborne was up and down
A manner cote armoure, as saith the story,
Before Deiphebe, insigne of his victory.

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hath rent fro Diomede
The same day, and whan this Troilus
It saw, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avising of the length and of the brede,
And all the werke, but as he gan behold,
Full sodainly his herte gan to cold.

As he that on the coler found within
A brooch, that he Creseide yave at morow
That she from Troy must nedes twin,
In remembraunce of him, and of his sorow,
And she him laid ayen her faith to borow,
To keepe it aye: but now full well he wist,
His lady nas no longer on to trist.

He goth him home, and gan full soone send
For Pandarus, and all this newe chaunce,
And of this broch, he told him word and end,
Complaining of her hertes variaunce,
His longe love, his trouth, and his pennaunce,
And after Death, without words more,
Full fast he cried, his rest him to restore.

Than spake he thus, "O lady mine Creseide,
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
Where is your love, where is your trouth" he seide,
"Of Diomedede have ye now all the fest?
Alas, I would have trowed at the least,
That sens ye n'olde in trouthe to me stond,
That ye thus n'olde have holden me in hond.

"Who shall now trowen on any othes mo?
Alas I never would have wend ere this,
That ye, Creseide, could have chaunged so,
Ne but I had agilt, and done amis;
So cruell wend I nat your herte ywis,
To slee me thus, alas your name of trouth
Is now fordone, and that is all my routh.

"Was there none other broche you list lete,
To feast with your new love," (quod he)

"But thilke broche that I with teres wet
You yave, as for a remembraunce of me?
None other cause alas, ne had ye,
But for dispite, and eke for that ye ment
All utterly to shewen your entent.

"Through which I see, that clene out of your mind
Ye have me cast, and I ne can nor may
For all this world within mine herte find,
To unloven you a quarter of a day:

In cursed time I borne was, welaway,
That you that done me all this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

“Now God” (quod he) “me sende yet the grace,
That I may meten with this Diomedé,
And truely, if I have might and space,
Yet shall I make I hope his sides blede :
Now God ” (quod he) “that oughtest taken hede
To forthren trouth, and wronges to punice,
Why n’ilt thou don a vengeance of this vice.

“O Pandarus, that in dremes for to trist
Me blamed hast, and wont art oft upbreide,
Now mayst thou seen thy self, if that thee list,
How trew is now thy nece, bright Creseide :
In sundry formes (God it wote)” he seide,
“The gods shewen both joy and tene
In slepe, and by my dreame it is now sene.

“And certainly, withouten more speech,
From henceforth, as ferforth as I may,
Mine owne death in armes woll I seech,
I reche nat how soone be the day,
But truely Creseide, sweet May,
Whom I have with all my might iserved,
That ye thus done, I have it nat deserved.”

This Pandarus, that all these thinges herd,
And wiste well he said a sooth of this,
He nat a word ayen to him answerd,
For sorie of his friends sorrow he is,
And shame for his nece hath done amis,
And stant astonied of these causes twey,
As still as stone, o word ne could he sey.

But at the last, thus he spake and seide,
“ My brother dere, I may do thee no more,
What should I saine, I hate ywis Creseide,
And God it wote, I woll hate her evermore :
And that thou me besoughtest done of yore,
Having unto mine honour ne my rest
Right no regard, I did all that thee lest.

“ If I did aught that might liken thee,
It is me lefe, and of this treason now,
God wote that it a sorrow is to me,
And dredelesse, for hertes ease of you,
Right faine I would amend it, wist I how :
And fro this world, Almighty God I pray
Deliver her soone, I can no more say.”

Great was the sorow and plaint of Troilus,
But forth her course fortune aye gan hold,
Creseide loveth the sonne of Tideus,
And Troilus mote wepe in cares cold,
Such is this world, who so it can behold,
In eche estate is little hertes rest,
God leve us to take it for the best.

In many cruell battaile out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
(As men may in these old bookes rede)
Was seen his knighthood and his great might,
And dredelesse his ire day and night
Full cruelly the Grekes aye abought,
And alway most this Diomedes, he sought.

And oft time (I finde) that they mette
With bloody strokes, and with wordes great,
Assaying how hir speares were whette,
And God it wote, with many a cruell heat

Gan Troilus upon his helme to beat,
But nathelesse, fortune it naught ne would
Of others hond that either dien should.

And if I had ytaken for to write
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than would I of his battailes endite,
And for that I to writen first began
Of his love, I have said as I can
His worthy deedes, who so list hem here,
Rede Dares, he can tell hem all yfere.

Beseeching every lady bright of hew,
And every gentill woman, what she be,
Albeit that Creseide was untrew,
That for that gilt ye be nat wroth with me,
Ye may her gilt in other bookes see,
And gladder I would write, if you lest,
Penelopes trouth, and good Alceste.

Ne say I nat this all onely for these men,
But most for women that betraied be
Through false folk, God yeve hem sorow, amen,
That with hir great wit and subtilte
Betraien you : and this meveth me
To speake, and in effect you all I pray
Beth ware of men, and hearkeneth what I say.

Go, little booke, go, my little tragedie,
There God my maker yet ere that I die,
So send me might to make some comedie :
But little booke, make thou none envie,
But subject ben unto all poesie,
And kisse the steps whereas thou seest pace
Of Vergil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, and Stace.

And for there is so great diversite
In English, and in writing of our tong,
So pray I to God, that none miswrite thee,
Ne the misse-metre, for default of tong :
And redde where so thou be, or eles song,
That thou be understand, God I beseech,
But yet to purpose of my rather speech.

The wrath (as I began you for to sey)
Of Troilus, the Greekes boughten dere,
For thousandes his bondes maden dey,
As he that was withouten any pere,
Save in his time Hector, as I can here,
But welaway, save onely Goddes will,
Dispitously him slough the fierce Achill.

And whan that he was slain in this manere,
His light ghoste full blisfully is went
Up to the hollownesse of the seventh sphere,
In his place leting everiche element,
And there he saw with full avisement
The erratike sterres, herkening armonie,
With sownes full of Heavens melodie.

And doun from thence, fast he gan avise
This little spot of earth, that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanite
To respect of the plaine felicite
That is in Heaven above : and at the last,
There he was slaine, his looking doun he cast.

And in himselfe he lough, right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his death so fast,
And dampned all our werkes that followeth so
The blinde lust, whiche that may nat last,

And shoulde[n] all our herte on Heaven cast,
And forth he went, shortely for to tell,
There as Mercurie sorted him to dwell.

Such fine hath lo this Troilus for love,
Such fine hath all his great worthinesse,
Such fine hath his estate royall above,
Such fine his lust, such fine hath his noblesse,
Such fine hath false worldes brotelnesse,
And thus began his loving of Creseide,
As I have told, and in this wise he deide.

O young fresh folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repaireth home from worldly vanite,
And of your hertes up casteth the visage
To thilke God, that after his image
You made, and thinketh all n'is but a faire,
This world that passeth sone, as floures faire.

And loveth him the which that right for love
Upon a crosse our soules for to bey,
First starfe and rose, and sit in Heven above,
For he n'll falsen no wight dare I sey,
That wol his herte all holy on him ley,
And sens he best to love is and most meeke,
What needeth fained loves for to seeke.

Lo here of painems cursed olde rites,
Lo here what all hir goddes may availe,
Lo here this wretched worldes appetites,
Lo here the fine and guerdon for travaile,
Of Jove, Apollo, of Mars, and such raskaile,
Lo here the forme of olde clerkes speech
In poetrie, if ye hir bookes seech.

O morall Gower, this booke I direct
To thee, and to the philosophicall Strode,
To vouchsafe there need is, to correct,
Of your benignities and zeales good,
And to the soothfast Christ that starfe on rood,
With all mine herte of mercy ever I pray,
And to the Lord aright, thus I speake and say,

Thou one, two, and three, eterne on live,
That raignest aie in thre, two, and one,
Uncircumscript, and all maist circumscribe,
Us from visible and invisible fone
Defend, and to thy mercy everichone,
So make us, Jesus, to thy mercy digne,
For love of maide, and mother thine benigne.

THUS ENDETH THE FIFTH AND LAST BOOKE OF TROILUS.



THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

A THOUSAND times I have heard men tell,
That there is joy in Heaven, and pain in
And I accord it wele that it is so, [Hell,
But nathelesse yet wote I wele also,
That there n'is non dwelling in this countre,
That either hath in Heaven or in Hell ybe,
Ne may of it none other waies witten,
But as he heard sayd, or found it written,
For by assay there may no man it preve.

But God forbede but men should leve
Wel more thing than they have seen with eye,
Men shall nat wenen every thing a lie
But if himself it seeth, or els it dooth,
For God wote thing is never the lesse soth,
Though every wight ne may it not ysee.
Bernarde the monke ne saugh all parde,
Than mote we to bookes that we find,
(Through which that old things ben in mind)
And to the doctrine of the old wise,
Yeve credence, in every skilful wise,
That tellen of the old apprevd stories,
Of holines, of reignes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, and other sundry things,
Of which I may not make rehearsings :

And if that old bookes were away,
Ylorne were of all remembraunce the kay.

Well ought us than, honouren and beleve
These bookes, there we han none other preve.

And as for me, though that I can but lite,
On bookes for to rede I me delite,
And to hem yeve I faith and full credence,
And in mine herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that there is game none,
That fro my bookes maketh me to gone,
But it be seldome on the holy daie,
Save certainly, whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I heare the foules sing,
And that the floures ginnen for to spring,
Farwell my booke, and my devotion,

Now have I than eke this condition,
That of all the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures white and rede,
Soch that men callen daisies in our toun,
To hem I have so great affection,
As I sayd erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bedde there daweth me no day,
That I nam up and walking in the mede,
To seen this floure ayenst the Sunne sprede,
Whan it up riseth early by the morrow,
That blisfull sight softeneth all my sorow,
So glad am I, whan that I have presence
Of it, to done it all reverence,
And she that is of all floures the floure,
Fulfilled of all vertue and honoure,
And every ylike faire, and fresh of hewe,
And ever I love it, and ever ylike newe,
And ever shall, till that mine herte die,
All sweare I not, of this I woll not lie.

There loved no wight hotter in his life,
And whan that it is eve I renne blithe,
As sone as ever the Sunne ginneth west,
To seen this floure, how it woll go to rest,
For feare of night, so hateth she derkenesse,
Her chere is plainly spred in the brightnesse
Of the Sunne, for there it woll unclose :
Alas that I ne had English rime, or prose
Suffisaunt, this floure to praise aright,
But helpeth ye, that han conning and might,
Ye lovers, that can make of sentement,
In this case ought ye be diligent,
To forthren me somewhat in my labour,
Whether ye been with the lefe or with the flour,
For well I wote, that ye han here beforne
Of making ropen, and had alway the corne,
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am full glad, if I may find an eare,
Of any goodly worde that ye han left,
And though it happen me to rehearsen eft,
That ye han in your freshe songes sayd,
Forbeareth me, and beth not evill apayd,
Sith that ye se, I doe it in the honour
Of love, and eke of service of the flour,
Whom that I serve, as I have wit or might,
She is the clerenesse and the very light,
That in this derke world me wint and ledeth
The herte within my sorowfull brest you dredeth,
And loveth so sore, that ye ben verily
The maistres of my wit, and nothing I,
My word, my workes, is knit so in your bonde
That as an harpe obeieth to the honde,
And make it soun after his fingering,
Right so mowe ye out of mine herte bring,

Soch voice, right as you list, to laugh or pain ;
Be ye my guide, and lady souverain :
As to mine yearthly God, to you I call,
Both in this werke, and my sorowes all.
But wherefore that I spake to yeve credence
To old stories, and done hem reverence,
And that men musten more thing bileve
That men may seen at eye or els preve,
That shall I sein, whan that I see my time,
I may nat all atones speake in rime ;
My busie ghost, that thursteth alway new,
To seen this flour so yong, so fresh of hew,
Constrained me, with so gredy desire,
That in my herte I fele yet the fire,
That made me rise ere it were day,
And this was now the first morow of May,
With dreadfull herte, and glad devotion
For to been at the resurrection
Of this floure, whan that it should uncloze
Again the Sunne, that rose as redde as rose,
That in the brest was of the beast that day,
That Angenores daughter ladde away :
And doune on knees anon right I me sette,
And as I could, this fresh floure I grette,
Kneeling alway, till it unclosed was,
Upon the small, soft, swete gras,
That was with floures swete embrouded all,
Of such swetenesse, and soch odour over all,
That for to speake of gomme, herbe, or tree,
Comparison may not ymaked be,
For it surmounteth plainly all odoures,
And of riche beaute of floures :
Forgotten had the yearth his poore estate
Of Winter, that him naked made and mate,

And with his sword of cold so sore greved ;
Now hath the attempre sunne al that releved
That naked was, and clad it new again ;
The small foules of the season fain,
That of the panter and the net been scaped,
Upon the fouler, that hem made awhaped
In Winter, and destroied had her brood,
In his dispite hem thought it did hem good
To sing of him, and in her song dispise
The foule chorle, that for his covetise,
Had him betraied, with his sophistrie,
This was her song, “ The fouler we desie,
And all his craft : ” and some songen clere,
Laies of love, that joy it was to here,
In worshipping and praysing of hir make,
And for the new blisfull Somers sake,
Upon the braunches full of blosmes soft,
In hir dilite, they tourned hem ful oft,
And songen, “ Blissed be saint Valentine,
For on his day I chese you to be mine,
Withouten repenting mine herte swete,”
And therewithall hir bekes gounen mete,
Yelding honour, and humble obeisaunce
To love, and didden hir other observaunce
That longeth unto love, and unto nature,
Constrewe that as you list, I do no cure :
And tho that had done unkindnesse,
As doeth the tidife, for new fanglenesse,
Besought mercy of hir trespassing,
And humbly song hir repenting,
And sworn on the blosmes to be true,
So that hir makes would upon hem rue,
And at the last maden hir acorde,
All found they Daunger for the time a lord,

Yet Pite, through his strong gentill might,
Foryave, and made Mercy passen right
Through Innocence, and ruled Curtesie :
But I ne cleape it nat innocence folie,
Ne false pite, for vertue is the meane,
As eticke sayth, in soch maner I meane.
And thus these foule, voide of all malice,
Acordeden to love, and lasten vice
Of hate, and song all of one acorde,
“ Welcome Sommer, our governour and lorde.”
And Zephirus, and Flora gentelly,
Yave to the floures soft and tenderly,
Hir swote breth, and made hem for to sprede,
As god and goddesse of the flourie Mede,
In which me thoughte I might day by day,
Dwellen alway, the joly month of May,
Withouten slepe, withouten meat or drinke :
Adowne full softly I gan to sinke,
And leaning on my elbow and my side,
The long day I shope me for to abide
For nothing els, and I shall nat lie,
But for to looke upon the daisie,
That well by reason men it call may
The daisie, or els the eye of the day,
The emprise, and floure of floures all,
I pray to God that faire mote she fall,
And all that loven floures, for her sake :
But nathelesse, ne wene nat that I make
In praising of the floure againe the lese,
No more than of the corne againe the shefe :
For as to me n'is lever none ne lother,
I n'am withholden yet with never nother,
Ne I not who serveth lese, ne who the floure,
Well brouken they hir service or laboure,

For this thing is all of another tonne,
Of old storie, er soch thing was begonne.
Whan that the Sunne out the south gan west,
And that this floure gan close, and gan to rest,
For derknes of the night, the which she dred,
Home to mine house full swiftly I me sped
To gone to rest, and earely for to rise,
To seene this floure to sprede, as I devise,
And in a little herber that I have,
That benched was on turves fresh ygrave,
I bad men shoulde me my couche make,
For deintie of the newe Sommers sake,
I bad hem strawen floures on my bedde;
Whan I was laid, and had mine eyen hedde,
I fell a slepe, and slept an houre or two,
Me met how I lay in the medow tho,
To seen this floure, that I love so and drede,
And from a ferre came walking in the Mede
The god of love, and in his hand a queene,
And she was clad in royall habite grene,
A fret of golde she had next her heere,
And upou that a white croune she beare,
With flourouns small, and I shall not lie,
For all the world right as a daisie
Ycrouned is, with white leaves lite,
So were the florouns of her croune white,
For of o perle fine orientall,
Her white croune was ymaked all,
For which the white croune above the grene
Made her like a daisie for to seme,
Considred eke her fret of gold above:
Yclothed was this mighty god of love
In silke embroidered, full of grene greves,
In which a fret of redde rose leves,

The freshest sens the world was first begun ;
His gilt heere was crouned with a sun,
In stede of gold, for hevinesse and weight,
Therwith me thought his face shone so bright
That well unnethes might I him behold,
And in his hand, me thought I saw him hold
Two firie dartes, as the gledes rede,
And angelike his winges saw I sprede :
And all be that men sain, that blind is he,
Algate me thought that he might se,
For sternely on me he gan behold,
So that his loking doeth mine herte cold,
And by the hand he held this noble queene,
Crouned with white, and clothed al in greene,
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this worlde though that men wold seke,
Halfe her beaute should they not finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
And therfore may I sain as thinketh me,
This song in praising of this lady fre.

Hide, Absolon, thy gilde tresses clere,
Hester, lay thou thy mekenesse all adoun,
Hide, Jonathas, all thy frendly manere,
Penelopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Make of your wifehode no comparisoun,
Hide your beauties, Isoude and Helein,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

Thy faire body let it not appere,
Lavine, and thou Lucrece of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boughten love so dere,
And Cleopatras, with all thy passioun,
Hide your trouthe of love, and your renoun,

And thou Tisbe, that hast of love such pain,
My lady commeth, that all this may distain.

Hero, Dido, Laodomia, al yfere,
And Phillis, hanging for Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Hipsiphile betrayed with Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouth neither boste ne soun,
Nor Hipermistre, or Ariadne, ye twain,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

This balade may full well ysongen be,
As I have sayd erst, by my lady fre,
For certainly, all these mowe not suffice,
To apperen with my lady in no wise,
For as the Sunne woll the fire distain,
So passeth all my lady souverain,
That is so good, so faire, so debonaire,
I pray to God that ever fall her faire,
For nad comforte ben of her presence,
I had ben dead, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes, and his chere,
As whan time is, hereafter ye shall here.

Behind this god of love upon the grene,
I saw coming of ladies ninetene,
In roiall habit, a full easie pace,
And after hem came of women such a trace,
That sens that God Adam had made of yerth,
The third part of mankinde, or the ferth,
Ne wende I nat by possibilite,
Had ever in this wide world ybe,
And true of love, these women were echon :
Now whether was that a wonder thing or non,
That right anon, as that they gonne espye

This floure, which that I clepe the daysie,
Full sodainly they stinten all at ones,
And kneled doune, as it were for the nones,
And songen with o voice, "Heale and honour
To trouth of womanhede, and to this flour,
That beareth our alderprise in figuring,
Her white croune beareth the witnessing,"
And with that word, a compas environ,
They sitten hem ful softly adoun :
First sat the god of love, and sith his quene,
With the white croune, clad all in grene,
And sithen al the remnaunt by and by,
As they were of estate, full curtesly,
Ne nat a worde was spoken in the place,
The mountenance of a furlong way of space.

I kneeling by this floure, in good entent
Abode to knowen what this people ment,
As still as any stone, till at the last
The god of love, on me his eyen cast,
And said, "Who kneleth there?" and I answerde
Unto his asking, whan that I it herde,
And sayd, "Sir it am I," and come him nere,
And salued him : (quod he) "What doest thou
So nigh mine owne floure, so boldly ? [here,
It were better worthy truely,
A worme to nighen nere my floure than thou."

"And why sir," (quod I) "and it like you ?
"For thou" (quod he) "art therto nothing able,
It is my relike, digne and delitable,
And thou my fo, and all my folke werriest,
And of mine old servaunts thou missaiest,
And hindrest hem, with thy translation,
And lettest folke from hir devocion,
To serve me, and holdest it folie

To serve Love, thou mayst it nat denie,
For in plain text, withouten nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the Rose,
That is an heresie ayenst my law,
And makest wise folke fro me withdraw;
And of Creseide, thou hast said as the list,
That maketh men to women lesse trist,
That ben as trewe as ever was any stele:
Of thine answer avise thee right wele,
For though thou renied hast my lay,
As other wretches have done many a day,
By seint Venus, that my mother is,
If that thou live, thou shalt repenten this,
So cruelly, that it shall well be sene."

Tho spake this lady, clothed all in greene
And saied, " God, right of your curtesie,
Ye mote herken if he can replie
Ayenst all this that ye have to him moved;
A God ne shulde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deite he shal be stable,
And there gracious and merciabie:
And if ye n'ere a God that knowen all,
Than might it be as I you tellen shall,
This man to you may falsely ben accused,
That as by right him ought ben excused,
For in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queinte totoler accusour,
That tabouren in your eares many a soun,
Right after hir imaginatioun,
To have your daliaunce, and for envie,
These ben the causes, and I shall nat lie,
Envie is lavender of the court alway,
For she ne parteth neither night ne day,
Out of the house of Cesar, thus saith Dant,

Who so that goeth algate she wol nat want.

“ And eke peraunter for this man is nice,
He might done it, gessing no malice,
But for he useth thinges for to make,
Him recketh nought of what mater he take,
Or him was boden make thilke twey,
Of some persone, and durst it nat withsey :
Or him repenteth utterly of this,
He ne hath nat done so greuously amis,
To translaten that old clerkes writen,
As though that he of malice would enditen,
Dispite of Love, and had himselfe it wrought :
This shold a rightwise lord have in his thought,
And nat be like tiraunts of Lombardie,
That han no reward but at tyrannie,
For he that king or lorde is naturell,
Him ought nat be tiraunt ne cruell,
As is a fermour, to done the harme he can,
He must thinke it is his liege man,
And is his tresour, and his gold in cofer,
This is the sentence of the philosopher :
A king to kepe his lieges in justice,
Withouten doute that is his office,
All woll he kepe his lordes in hir degrec,
As it is right and skil, that they bee
Enhaunsed and honoured, and most dere,
For they ben halfe goddes in this world here,
Yet mote he done both right to poore and riche,
All be that hir estate be nat both yliche,
And have of poore folke compassion,
For lo, the gentill kinde of the lion,
For whan a flie offendeth him or biteth,
He with his taile away the flie smiteth,
Al easily, for of his gentrie

Him deineth nat to wreke him on a flie,
As doeth a curre, or els another beest ;
In noble corage ought ben areest,
And waien every thing by equite,
And ever have regard unto his owne degre :
For, sir, it is no maistrie for a lord
To dampne a man, without answer of word,
And for a lorde, that is full foule to use ;
And it so be, he may him nat excuse,
But asketh mercy with a dreadfull herte,
And profereth him, right in his bare sherte
To ben right at your owne judgement,
Than ought a God by short avisement,
Consider his owne honour, and his trespass,
For sith no cause of death lieth in this case,
You ought to ben the lightlier merciable,
Letteth your ire, and bethe somewhat trefable :
The man hath served you of his conninges,
And forthred well your law in his makinges,
All be it that he can nat well endite,
Yet hath he made leude folke delite
To serve you, in preising of your name,
He made the boke, that hight, the House of Fame,
And eke the Death of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parliament of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebes, though the storic is knowen lite,
And many an himpne, for your holy daies,
That lighten Balades, Rondels, Virelaies :
And for to speake of other holinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boece,
And made the Life also of Saint Cecile :
He made also, gone is a great while,
Origenes upon the Maudelaine :

Him ought now to have the lesse paine,
He hath made many a ley, and many a thing.

“Now as ye be a God, and eke a king,
I your Alceste, whilom quene of Trace,
I aske you this man right of your grace,
That ye him never hurt in al his live,
And he shal swearen to you, and that blive,
He shal never more agilten in this wise,
But shal maken, as ye woll devise,
Of women trewe in loving al hir life,
Where so ye woll, of maiden or of wife,
And forthren you as much as he misseide,
Or in the Rose, or eles in Creseide.”

The god of love answerde her thus anon,
“Madame, (quod he) “it is so long agon,
That I you knew, so charitable and trewe,
That never yet, sens the world was newe,
To me ne found I better none than ye,
If that I woll save my degree :

I may nor woll nat werne your request,
Al lieth in you, doth with him as you lest.

“I al foryeve withouten lenger space,
For who so yeveth a yefte or doth a grace,
Do it betime, his thanke shall be the more,
And demeth ye what ye shal do therfore.

“Go thanke now my lady here,” (quod he.)
I rose, and doun I set me on my knee,
And said thus : “Madame, the God above
Foryelde you that the god of love
Have maked me his wrath to foryeve,
And grace so longe for to live,
That I may know sothely what ye be,
That have me holpen, and put in this degre :
But trewly I wende, as in this caas

Nought have a gilte, ne done to love trespas,
For why ? a trewe man withouten drede
Hath nat to parten with a theves dede.

“ Ne a trewe lover ought me nat to blame,
Though that I speke a false lover some shame :
They ought rather with me for to hold,
For that I of Creseide wrote or told,
Or of the rose, what so mine author ment,
Algate God wotte it was mine entent
To forthren trouth in love, and it cherice,
And to ben ware fro falsenesse and fro vice,
By which ensample, this was my mening.”

And she answerde, “ Let be thine arguing,
For love ne wol not counterpleted be,
In right ne wrong, and lerne that of me :
Thou hast thy grace, and hold the right thereto :
Now woll I saine what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespas, understand it here :
Thou shalt while that thou livest yere by yere,
The most partie of thy time spende,
In making of a glorious legende,
Of good women, maidenens, and wives,
That weren trewe in loving all hir lives,
And tell of false men that hem betraien,
That al hir life ne do nat but assaien
How many women they may done a shame,
For in your world that is now hold a game :
And though thee like nat a lover be,
Speke wel of love, this penance yeve I thee,
And to the god of love I shal so pray,
That he shal charge his servants by any way,
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quite,
Go now thy waie, this penaunce is but lite :
And whan this boke is made, yeve it the quene

On my behalfe, at Eltham, or at Shene."

The god of love gan smile, and than he said :

" Wost thou," (quod he) " where this be wife or
maid,

Or queene, or countesse, or of what degree,

That hath so littell penaunce yeven thee,

That hast deserved sore for to smart,

But pite renneth sone in gentle herte :

That maist thou sene, she kitheth what she is."

And I answerde, " Naie, sir, so have I blis,

No more, but that I see well she is good."

" That is a trewe tale by mine hood,"

(Quod Love) " and thou knowest wel parde,

If it be so that thou avise the :

Hast thou nat in a booke in thy cheste,

The great goodnesse of the quene Alceste,

That turned was into a dayesie,

She that for her husband chese to die,

And eke to gone to Hell, rather than he,

And Hercules rescued her parde,

And brought her out of Hel againe to blis ?"

And I answerde againe, and said " Yes,

Now know I her, and is this good Alceste,

The dayesie, and mine owne hertes reste ?

Now fele I well the goodnesse of this wife,

That both after her death, and in her life,

Her great bounte doubleth her renoun,

Wel hath she quit me mine affectioun,

That I have to her floure the dayesie,

No wouder is though Jove her stellifie,

As telleth Agaton, for her great goodnesse,

Her white corowne beareth of it witnesse :

For all so many vertues had she,

As smal florounes in her corowne be,

In remembraunce of her, and in honour,
Cibylla made the dayesie and the floure,
Ycrowned al with white, as men may se,
And Mars yave to her a corowne reed parde,
In stede of rubies set among the white :”
Therewith this quene woxe red for shame alite,
Whan she was praysed so in her presence,
Than said Love, “A full great negligence
Was it to thee, that ilke time thou made,
(Hide Absolon thy tresses) in balade,
That thou forget in thy songe to sette,
Sith that thou art so greatly in her dette,
And wost well that kalender is she
To any woman, that woll lover be :
For she taught all the craft of trewe loving,
And namely of wifehode the living,
And all the bondes that she ought keepe ;
Thy litel witte was thilke time asleepe :
But now I charge thee upon thy life,
That in thy legende thou make of this wife,
Whan thou hast other smale ymade before :
And fare now well, I charge thee no more,
But er I go, thus much I will the tell,
Ne shal no trewe lover come in Hell.

“These other ladies sitting here a rowe,
Ben in my balade, if thou const hem know,
And in thy bokes, al thou shalt hem find,
Have hem now in thy legende al in mind,
I meane of hem that ben in thy knowing,
For here ben twenty thousand mo sitting
Than thou knowest, good women all,
And trewe of love, for ought that may befall :
Make the metres of hem as thee lest,
I mote gone home, the Sunne draweth west,

To Paradis, with all this companie,
 And serve alway the fresh dayesie.
 At Cleopatras I woll that thou begin,
 And so forth, and my love so shalt thou win,
 For let see now what man that lover be,
 Wol done so strong a paine for love as she.
 I wote well that thou maist nat all it rime,
 That suche lovers did in hir time:
 It were too long to reden and to here,
 Suffiseth me thou make in this manere,
 That thou reherce of al her life the great,
 After these old authours listen for to treat,
 For who so shall so many a story tell,
 Sey shortely or he shall too longe dwell:"
 And with that worde my bookes gan I take,
 And right thus on my legende gan I make.

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE LEGENDE OF CLEOPATRAS

Queene of Egypt.

AFTER the death of Ptholome the king,
 That all Egypt had in his governing,
 Reigned his queene Cleopataras,
 Till on a time bifel there such a caas,
 That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
 For to conqueren realmes and honour,
 Unto the tounce of Rome, as was usaunce,
 To have the world at her obeisaunce,
 And soth to say, Autonius was his name,
 So fil it, as fortune him ought a shame,

Whan he was fallen in prosperite,
Rebel unto the toune of Rome is he,
And over al this, the suster of Cesare
He left her falsely, er that she was ware,
And would algates han another wife,
For which he toke with Rome and Cesar strife.

Nathelesse, forsoth this ilke senatour,
Was a full worthy gentill werriour,
And of his deth it was ful great damage,
But Love had brought this man in such a rage
And him so narow bounden in his laas,
And all for the love of Cleopatras,
That al the world he set at no value,
Him thought there was nothing to him so due,
As Cleopatras, for to love and serve,
Him thought that in armes for to sterve
In the defence of her, and of her right.

This noble queene, eke loved so this knight,
Through his desert, and for his chevalrie,
As certainly, but if that bokes lie,
He was of person, and of gentilnesse,
And of discretion, and of hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may,
And she was faire, as is the rose in May :
And, for to maken shorte is the best,
She woxe his wife, and had him as her lest.

The wedding and the feast to devise,
To me that have ytake such emprise,
And so many a storie for to make,
It were to longe, lest that I should slake
Of thing that beareth more effect and charge,
For men may overlade a ship or barge,
And forthy, to effect than woll I skippe,
And al the remnaunt I woll let it slippe.

Octavian, that wood was of this dede,
Shope him an hooste on Antony to lede,
Al utterly for his distruction,
With stoute Romaines, cruell as lion ;
To ship they went, and thus I let hem saile.

Antonius was ware, and woll nat faile
To meten with these Romaines, if he may,
Toke eke his rede, and both upon a day
His wife and he, and all his host forth went
To ship anone, ne lenger they ne stent,
And in the see it happed hem to mete ;
Up goeth the trumpe, and for to shoute and shete
And painen hem to set on with the Sunne,
With grisly sown out goeth the great gunne,
And bertely they hurtlen in all at ones,
And fro the top doune cometh the great stones,
In goeth the grapenel so full of crokes,
Among the ropes ran the shering hokes,
In with the polaxe preaseth he and he,
Behind the maste beginneth he to flee,
And out againe, and driveth him over borde,
He sticketh him upon his speares orde,
He rent the saile with hookes like a sith,
He bringeth the cup, and biddeth hem be blith,
He poureth peesen upon the hatches slider,
With pottes full of lime, they gone togider,
And thus the longe day in fight they spend,
Till at the last, as every thing hath end,
Antony is shent, and put him to the flight,
And all his folke to go, that best go might,
Fleeth eke the quene, with all her purple saile,
For strokes which that went as thicke as haile,
No wonder was, she might it nat endure :
And whan that Antony saw that aventure,

“Alas” (quod he) “the day that I was borne,
My worship in this day thus have I lorne,”
And for dispaire out of his wit he start,
And rose himselfe anon throughout the herte,
Ere that he ferther went out of the place :
His wife, that could of Cesar have no grace,
To Egypt is fled, for drede and for distresse,
But herkeneth ye that speken of kindnesse.

Ye men that falsely swearen many an oth,
That ye woll die, if that your love be wroth,
Here may ye seene of women such a trouth.
This woful Cleopatra had made such routh,
That there n’is tonge none that may it tell,
But on the morow she woll no lenger dwell,
But made her subtill werkmen make a shrine
Of all the rubies and the stones fine
In all Egypt that she coulde espie,
And put full the shrine of spicerie,
And let the corse enbaume, and forth she fette
This dead corse, and in the shrine it shette,
And next the shrine a pit than doth she grave,
And all the serpentes that she might have,
She put hem in that grave, and thus she seid :
“Now love, to whom my sorowfull herte obeid,
So ferforthly, that fro that blisfull hour
That I you swore to ben all freely your,
I meane you, Antonius my knight,
That never waking in the day or night,
Ye n’ere out of mine hertes remembraunce,
For wele or wo, for carole, or for daunce,
And in my selfe this covenaut made I tho,
That right such as ye felten wele or wo,
As ferforth as it in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wifhood aye,

The same would I felen, life or death,
 And thilke covenaut while me lasteth breath
 I woll fulfill, and that shall well be seene,
 Was never unto her love a truer queene :”
 And with that word, naked with full good herte,
 Among the serpents in the pit she start,
 And there she chese to have her burying.
 Anone the neders gonne her for to sting,
 And she her death receiveth with good chere,
 For love of Antony that was her so dere.
 And this is storiall, sooth it is no fable :
 Now ere I find a man thus true and stable,
 And woll for love his death so freely take,
 I pray God let our hedes never ake.

THE

LEGEND OF TISBE OF BABILON.

AT Babiloine whylome fill it thus,
 The whiche toun the queen Simiramus
 Let dichen al about, and walles make
 Ful hie, of harde tiles well ybake :
 There were dwelling in this noble toun,
 Two lordes, which that were of great renoun,
 And woneden so nigh upon a grene,
 That ther nas but a stone wal hem between,
 As oft in great tounes is the wonne :
 And sothe to saine, that one man had a sonne,
 Of all that lond one of the lustiest,
 That other had a doughter, the fairest
 That estward in the world was tho dwelling ;
 The name of everiche, gan to other spring,
 By women that were neighbours aboute,

For in that countre yet withouten doute,
Maidenes ben ykept for jelousie
Ful straite, lest they didden some folie.

This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
Thisbe hight the maide, (Naso saith thus)
And thus by report was hir name yshove,
That as they woxe in age, so woxe hir love:
And certaine, as by reason of hir age,
Ther might have ben betwixt hem mariage,
But that hir fathers n'olde it nat assent,
And bothe in love ylike sore they brent,
That none of all hir friendes might it lette,
But prively sometime yet they mette
By sleight, and spaken some of hir desire,
As wrie the glede and hotter is the fire,
Forbid a love, and it is ten times so wode.

This wal, which that bitwixt hem both stode,
Was cloven atwo, right fro the top adoun,
Of old time, of his foundatioun,
But yet this clift was so narrow and lite
It was nat scene, dere inough a mite,
But what is that, that love cannot espie?
Ye lovers two, if that I shall not lie,
Ye founden first this little narrow clift,
And with a sound, as soft as any shrill,
They let hir wordes through the clifte pace,
And tolden, while that they stoden in the place,
All hir complaint of love, and all hir wo,
At every time whan they durst so.

On that one side of the wall stood he,
And on that other side stood Tisbe,
The sweet soun of other to receive,
And thus hir wardeins would they disceive,
And every daie this wall they would threte,

And wish to God that it were down ybete,
Thus wold they sain, "Alas, thou wicked wall,
Through thine envie thou us lettest all,
Why nilt thou cleave, or fallen all atwo,
Or at the least, but thou wouldest so,
Yet wouldest thou but ones let us mete,
Or ones that we might kissen swete,
Than were we cured of our cares cold,
But nathelesse, yet be we to thee hold,
In as much as thou suffrest for to gone,
Our words through thy lime and eke thy stone,
Yet ought we with thee ben well apaid."

And whan these idle wordes weren said,
The cold wall they wolden kisse of stone,
And take hir leave, and forth they wolden gone,
And this was gladly in the eventide,
Or wonder erly, least men it espide.
And long time they wrought in this manere,
Till on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
Aurora with the stremes of her hete,
Had dried up the dew of herbes wete,
Unto this clift, as it was wont to be,
Come Piramus, and after come Tisbe,
And plighen trouthe fully in hir fay,
That ilke same night to steale away,
And to beguile hir wardeins everychone,
And forth out of the citie for to gone,
And for the fieldes ben so brode and wide,
For to mete in o place at o tide,
They set markes, hir meetings should be
There king Ninus was graven, under a tree,
For old paynims, that idolles heried,
U'seden tho in fields to ben buried,
And fast by his grave was a well,

And shortely of this tale for to tell,
This covenant was affirmed wonder fast,
And long hem thought that the Sunne last,
That it nere gone under the see adoun.

This Tisbe hath so great affectioun,
And so great liking Piramus to see,
That whan she saw her time might be,
At night she stale away full prively,
With her face iwimpled subtelly,
For all her friends (for to save her trouth)
She hath forsake alas, and that is routh,
That ever woman woulde be so trew,
To trusten man, but she the bet him knew:
And to the tree she goeth a full good pace,
For love made her so hardy in this case,
And by the well adoun she gan her dresse,
Alas, than commeth a wild lionesse
Out of the wood, withouten more arrest,
With bloody mouth, strangling of a beast,
To drinken of the well there as she sat,
And whan that Tisbe had espied that,
She rist her up, with a full drery herte,
And in a cave, with dreadfull foot she start,
For by the Moone she saw it well withall.
And as she ran, her wimple let she fall,
And toke none hede, so sore she was awhaped,
And eke so glad that she was escaped,
And that she sat, and lurketh wonder still:
Whan that this lionesse hath dronke her fill,
About the well gan she for to wind,
And right anon the wimple gan she find,
And with her bloody mouth it all to rent,
Whan this was done, no lenger she ne stent,
But to the wood her way than hath she nome.

And at the last this Piramus is come,
But all too long (alas) at home was hee,
The Moone shone, men might well ysee,
And in his way, as that he come full fast,
His eyen to the ground adoun he cast,
And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun,
He saw the steppes brode of a lioun,
And in his herte he suddainly agrose,
And pale he wext, therwith his herte arose,
And nere he came, and found the wimple torne,
“ Alas” (quod he) “ the day that I was borne,
This o night woll both us lovers slee,
How should I asken mercy of Tisbee,
Whan I am he that have you slaine, alas,
My bidding hath you slaine in this caas,
Alas, to bidde a woman gone by night
In place thereas perill fallen might,
And I so slow, alas I ne had be
Here in this place, a furlong way ere ye,
Now what lion that is in this forrest,
My body mote he rente, or what beast
That wild is, gnawen mote he mine herte,”
And with that word he to the wimple start,
And kist it oft, and wept on it full sore,
And said, “ Wimple, alas, there n’is no more,
But thou shalt feele as well the blood of me,
As thou hast felt the bleeding of Tisbe :”
And with that word he snote him to the herte,
The blood out of the wound as broad start,
As water, whan the conduit broken is.

Now Tisbe, which that wist nat this,
But sitting in her drede, she thought thus,
“ If it so fall out that my Piramus
Be comen hither, and may me nat yfind,

He may me holden false, and eke unkind,"
And out she commeth, and after him gan espie,
Both with her herte, and with her eien,
And thought, "I woll him tellen of my drede,
Both of the lionesse and of my dede."
And at the last her love than hath she found,
Beating with his heeles on the ground,
All bloody, and therewithall abacke she start,
And like the wawes, quappe gan her herte,
And pale as boxe she woxe, and in a throw
Avised her, and gan him well to know,
That it was Piramus her herte dere.

Who could write whiche a deadly chere
Hath Tisbe now, and how her haire she rent,
And how she gan her selfe to turment,
And how she lieth and swouneth on the ground,
And how she wept of teares full his wound,
How medleth she his blood with her complaint,
How with her blood her selven gan she paint,
How clippeth she the red corse, alas,
How doth this wofull Tisbe in this caas,
How kisseth she his frosty mouth so cold:
"Who hath don this? and who hath ben so bold
To sleen my lefe? o speake Piramus,
I am thy Tisbe, that thee calleth thus,"
And therewithall she lifteth up his head.

This wofull man that was nat fully dead,
Whan that he herd the name of Tisbe crie,
On her he cast his heavy deadly eyen,
And down againe, and yeeldeth up the ghost.

Tisbe rist up, without noise or bost,
And saw her wimple and his empty sheath,
And eke his sward, that him hath done to death,
Than spake she thus, "Thy woful hand" (quod she)

“ Is strong ynough in such a werke to me,
For love shall yeve me strength and hardinesse,
To make my wound large ynough I gesse,
I woll thee followen dead, and I woll be
Felaw, and cause eke of thy death,” (quod she)
“ And though that nothing save the death only,
Might thee fro me depart trewly,
Thou shalt no more departe now fro me
Than fro the death, for I woll go with thee.

“ And now ye wretched jelous fathers our,
We that weren whylome children your,
We praien you, withouten more envie,
That in o grave we moten lie,
Sens love hath brought us to this pitous end,
And right wise God, to every lover send,
That loveth trewly, more prosperite
Than ever had Piramus and Tisbe,
And let no gentill woman her assure,
To putten her in such an aventure,
But God forbid but that a woman can
Ben as true and loving as a man,
And for my part I shall anon it kithe :”
And with that word, his swerde she tooke swithe,
That warme was of her loves blood, and hote,
And to the herte she her selven smote.

And thus are Tisbe and Piramus ago,
Of true men I find but few mo
In all my bookes, save this Piramus,
And therefore have I spoken of him thus ;
For it is deintie to us men to find
A man that can in love be true and kind.

Here may ye seene, what lover so he be,
A woman dare, and can as well as he.

THE LEGEND OF DIDO,

Queene of Cartage.

GLORY and honour, Virgile Mantuan,
Be to thy name, and I shall as I can
Follow thy lanterne, as thou goest beforne,
How Eneas to Dido was forsworne,
In thine Eneide, and Naso woll I take
The tenour and the great effects make,
Whan Troy brought was to destruction
By Grekes sleight, and namely by Sinon,
Faining the horse offred unto Minerve,
Through which that many a Trojan must sterve,
And Hector had after his death apered,
And fire so wood, it might nat ben stered,
In all the noble toure of Ilion,
That of the citie was the cheefe dungeon,
And all the country was so low ybrought,
And Priamus the king fordone and nought,
And Eneas was charged by Venus
To flien away, he tooke Ascanius
That was his son, in his right hand and fled,
And on his backe he bare and with him led
His old father, cleped Anchises,
And by the way his wife Creusa he lecs,
And mokell sorrow had he in his mind,
Ere that he coulede his fellowship find:
But at the last, whan he had hem found,
He made him redy in a certaine stound,
And to the sea full fast he gan him hie,
And saileth forth with all his companie
Towards Itaile, as would destinee:

But of his adventures in the see,
N'is nat to purpose for to speke of here,
For it accordeth nat to my matere,
But as I said, of him and of Dido
Shall be my tale, till that I have do.

So long he sailed in the salt see,
Till in Libie unneth arrived he,
So was he with the tempest all to shake,
And whan that he the haven had ytake,
He had a knight was called Achatees,
And him of all his fellowship he chees,
To gone with him, the country for t'espie,
He tooke with him no more companie,
But forth they gon, and left his ships ride,
His feere and he, withouten any guide.

So long he walketh in this wilderness,
Till at the last he met an hunteressee,
A bow in hond, and arrowes had she,
Her clothes cutted were unto the knee,
But she was yet the fairest creature
That ever was yformed by nature,
And Eneas and Achates she gret,
And thus she to hem spake, whan she hem met.

“Saw ye” (quod she) “as ye han walked wide,
Any of my sustren walke you beside,
With any wild bore or other beast,
That they have hunted into this forrest,
Ytucked up with arrowes in her caas?”

“Nay sothly lady” (quod this Eneas)
“But by thy beautie, as it thinketh me,
Thou mightest never yearthly woman be,
But Phebus suster art thou, as I gesse,
And if so be that thou be a goddesse,
Have mercy on our labour and our wo.”

“ I n’am no goddesse soothly” (quod she tho)
For maidens walken in this country here,
With arrows and with bow, in this manere :
This is the realme of Libie there ye been,
Of which that Dido lady is and queen,”
And shortly told all the occasion
Why Dido came into that region,
Of which as now me listeth nat to rime,
It nedeth nat, it nere but losse of time,
For this is all and some, it was Venus
His owne mother, that spake with him thus,
And to Cartage she bade he should him dight,
And vanished anon out of his sight.
I could follow word for word Vergile,
But it would lasten all to longe while.

This noble queen, that cleped was Dido,
That whylom was the wife of Sicheel,
That fairer was than the bright Sunne,
This noble toun of Carthage hath begunne,
In which she reigneth in so great honour,
That she was hold of all quenes flour,
Of gentillesse, of freedome, and of beaute,
That well was him that might her ones se,
Of kings and lordes so desired,
That all the world her beautie had yfired,
She stood so well in every wights grace.

Whan Eneas was come unto the place,
Unto the maister temple of all the toun,
There Dido was in her devotioun,
Full prively his way than hath he nome :
Whan he was in the large temple come,
I cannot saine, if that it be possible,
But Venus had him maked invisible,
Thus sayth the booke, withouten any lees.

And whan this Eneas and Achates
Hadden in this temple ben over all,
Than found they depainted on a wall,
How Troy and all the land destroyed was,
“ Alas that I was borne” (quod Eneas)
“ Through the world our shame is kid so wide,
Now it is painted upon every side :
We that weren in prosperite,
Ben now disclaundred, and in such degre,
No lenger for to liven I ne kepe,”
And with that word he brast out for to wepe,
So tenderly that routh it was to seene.

This fresh lady, of the citie queen,
Stood in the temple, in her estate roiall,
So richely, and eke so faire withall,
So yong, so lustie, with her eyen glade,
That if that God that Heaven and yearth made,
Would have a love, for beauty and goodnesse,
And womanhede, trouth, and semelnesse,
Whom should he loven but this lady swete ?
There n’is no woman to him halfe so mete :
Fortune, that hath the world in governaunce,
Hath sodainly brought in so new a chaunce,
That never was there yet so fremed a caas,
For all the company of Eneas,
Which that we wend have lorne in the see,
Arrived is nought ferre fro that citee,
For which the greatest of his lords, some
By aventure ben to the citie come
Unto that same temple for to seke
The queene, and of hir socour her beseke,
Such renome was ther sprong of her goodnes.

And whan they had tolde all hir distresse,
And all hir tempest and all hir hard caas,

Unto the queene appeared Eneas,
And openly beknew that it was he,
Who had joy than, but his meine,
That hadden found hir lord, hir governour.

The quene saw they did him such honour,
And had heard of Eneas, ere tho,
And in her herte had routh and wo,
That ever such a noble man as he
Shall ben disherited in such degre,
And saw the man, that he was like a knight,
And suffisaunt of person and of might,
And like to ben a very gentilman,
And well his wordes he besette can,
And had a noble visage for the nones,
And formed well of brawne and of bones,
And after Venus had such fairenesse,
That no man might be halfe so faire I gesse,
And well a lord him semed for to be,
And for he was a straunger, somewhat she
Liked him the bet, as God do boote,
To some folke often new thing is soote,
Anon her herte hath pitee of his wo,
And with pitie, love came also,
And thus for pitie and for gentilnesse,
Refreshed must he ben of his distresse.

She said, certes, that she sorry was,
That he hath had such perill and such caas,
And in her friendly speech, in this manere
She to him spake, and sayd as ye may here.

“ Be ye nat Venus sonne and Anchises,
In good faith, all the worship and encrees
That I may goodly done you, ye shall have,
Your shippes and your meine shall I save,”
And many a gentle word she spake him to,

And commaunded her messengers to go
The same day withouten any faile
His shippes for to seeke and hem vitaile,
Full many a beast she to the ships sent,
And with the wine she gan hem to present,
And to her roiall paleis she her sped,
And Eneas she alway with her led.
What nedeth you the feastes to discribe,
He never better at ease was in his live,
Full was the feast of deinties and richesse,
Of instruments, of song, and of gladnesse,
And many an amorous looking and devise.

This Eneas is come to Paradise
Out of the swolowe of Hell and thus in joy
Remembreth him of his estate in Troy,
To dauncing chambers full of paraments,
Of rich beds, and of pavements,
This Eneas is ledde after the meat,
And with the queene whan that he had seat,
And spices parted, and the wine agon,
Unto his chamber was he lad anon
To take his ease, and for to have his rest
With all his folke, to done what so him lest.

Ther nas courser well ybridled none,
Ne stede for the justing well to gone,
Ne large palfrey, easie for the nones,
Ne jewell fret full of rich stones
Ne sakes full of gold, of large wight,
Ne rubie none that shineth by night,
Ne gentill hautein faukon heronere,
Ne hound for hart, wild bore, or dere,
Ne cup of gold, with floreins new ybette,
That in the lond of Libie may ben gette,
That Dido ne hath Eneas it ysent,

And all is payed, what that he hath spent.
Thus can this honorable queene her gestes call,
As she that can in freedome passen all.

Eneas sothly eke, without lees,
Hath sent to his shippe by Achates
After his sonne, and after rich things,
Both scepter, clothes, broches, and eke rings,
Some for to weare, and some to present
To her, that all these noble things him sent,
And bad his sonne how that he should make
The presenting, and to the queene it take.

Repaired is this Achates againe,
And Eneas full blisfull is and faine,
To seene his yong sonne Ascanius,
For to him it was reported thus,
That Cupido, that is the god of love,
At prayer of his mother high above,
Had the likenesse of the child ytake,
This noble queene enamoured for to make
On Eneas: but of that scripture
Be as he may, I make of it no cure,
But soth is this, the queen hath made such chere
Unto this child, that wonder was to here,
And of the present that his father sent,
She thanked him oft in good entent.

Thus is this queen in pleasaunce and joy,
With all these new lustie folke of Troy,
And of the deeds hath she more enquired
Of Eneas, and all the story lered
Of Troy, and all the long day they tway
Entendeden for to speake and for to play,
Of which there gan to bredden such a fire,
That sely Dido hath now such desire
With Eneas her new guest to deale,

That she lost her hew and eke her heale.

Now to th' effect, now to the fruit of all,
Why I have told this story, and tellen shall.

Thus I begin, it fell upon a night,
Whan that the Mone upreised had her light,
This noble queene unto her rest went,
She sighed sore, and gon her selfe tourment,
She walketh, waloweth, and made many braide,
As done these lovers, as I have heard saide,
And at the last, unto her suster Anne
She made her mone, and right thus spake she than.

“ Now dere suster mine, what may it be
That me agasteth in my dreame ” (quod she)
“ This ilke new Trojan is so in my thought,
For that me thinketh he is so wel iwrought,
And eke so likely to ben a man,
And therwith so mikell good he can,
That all my love and life lieth in his cure,
Have ye nat heard him tell his aventure ?

“ Now certes Anne, if that ye rede me,
I woll faine to him ywedded be,
This is the effect, what should I more scine,
In him lieth all, to do me live or deine.”

Her suster Anne, as she that coud her good,
Said as her thought, and somdele it withstood,
But hereof was so long a sermoning,
It were to long to make rehearsing :
But finally, it may not be withstonde,
Love woll love, for no wight woll it wonde.
The dawning uprist out of the see,
This amorous quene chargeth her meine,
The nettes dresse, and speres brode and kene,
In hunting woll this lustie fresh quene,
So pricketh her this new jolly wo,

To horse is all her lustie folke ygo,
Unto the court the houndes ben ybrought,
And up on courser swift as any thought,
Her yong knights heven all about,
And of her women eke an huge rout,
Upon a thicke palfray, paper white,
With saddle redde, embrouded with delite,
Of gold the barres, up enbossed high,
Sate Dido, all in gold and perrie wrigh,
And she is faire as is the bright morrow,
That healeth sicke folkes of nights sorrow :
Upon a courser, startling as the fire,
Men might tourne him with a little wire.

But Eneas, like Phebus to devise,
So was he fresh arrayed in his wise,
The fomic bridle, with the bitte of gold,
Governeth he right as himselfe hath would,
And forth this noble queene, this lady ride
On hunting, with this Trojan by her side,
The herd of hartes founden is anon,
With " Hey go bet, pricke thou, let gon let gon,
Why n'ill the lion comen or the beare,
That I might him ones meten with this spear,"
Thus saine this yong folke, and up they kill
The wild hartes, and have hem at hir will.

Emong all this, to romblen gan the Heven,
The thunder rored with a grisly steven,
Doun come the rain, with haile and sleet so fast.
With Heavens fire, that made so sore agast
This noble queene, and also her meine,
That eche of hem was glad away to flie,
And shortly, fro the tempest her to save,
She fled her selfe into a little cave,
And with her went this Eneas also,

I n'ot with hem if there went any mo,
The authour maketh of it no mention :
And here began the deepe affection
Betwixt hem two, this was the first morrow
Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorrow,
For there hath Eneas ykneled so,
And told her all his hurt and all his wo,
And sworne so deepe to her to be true,
For wele or wo, and chaunge for no new,
And as a false lover so well can plaine,
That sely Dido rewed on his paine,
And toke him for husbond, and became his wife
For evermore, while that hem last life,
And after this whan that the tempest stent
With mirth out as they came, home they went.
The wicked fame up rose, and that anon,
How Eneas hath with the queene ygon
Into the cave, and demed as hem list :
And whan the king (that Yarbass hight) it wist,
As he that had her loved ever his life,
And wooed her to have her to his wife,
Such sorrow as he hath maked, and such chere,
It is a routh and pitie for to here,
But as in love, alday it happeth so,
That one shall laughen at anothers wo,
Now laughed Eneas, and is in joy,
And more richesse than ever was in Troy.

O sely woman, full of innocence,
Full of pitie, of truth, and continence,
What maked you to men to trusten so ?
Have ye such routh upon hir fained wo,
And have such old ensamples you beforne ?
See ye nat all how they ben forsworne,
Where see ye one, that he ne hath laft his lefe,

Or ben unkind, or done her some mischefe,
Or pilled her or bosted of his dede,
Ye may as well it seene, as ye may rede.
Take hede now of this great gentilman,
This Trojan, that so well her please can,
That faineth him so true and obeysing,
So gentill, and so privie of his doing,
And can so well done all his obeysaunce
To her, at feastes and at daunce,
And whan she goeth to temple, and home agayn,
And fasten till he hath his lady seyn,
And bearen in his devises for her sake,
N'ot I nat what, and songes would he make,
Justen, and done of armes many things,
Send her letters, tokens, brooches, and rings.

Now herkneth how he shal his lady serve :
There as he was in perill for to sterve
For hunger and for mischefe in the see,
And desolate, and fled fro his countree,
And all his folke with tempest all to driven,
She hath her body and eke her realme yeven
Into his hond, there she might have been
Of other land than of Cartage a queen,
And lived in joy inough, what would ye more.

This Eneas, that hath thus deepe yswore,
Is wearie of his craft within a throw,
The hote earnest is all overblow,
And prively he dothe his ships dight,
And shapeth him to steale away by night.

This Dido hath suspicion of this,
And thought well that it was al amis,
For in his bed he lieth a night and siketh,
She asketh him anon, what him misliketh,
“ My dere herte which that I love most.”

“Certes”(quod he) “this night my fathers ghost
Hath in my slepe me so sore tourmented,
And eke Mercury his message hath presented,
That needes to the conquest of Itaile
My destinie is soone for to saile,
For which me thinketh, brosten is mine herte:”
Therwith his false teares out they start,
And taketh her within his armes two.

“Is that in earnest”(quod she) “woll ye so,
Have ye nat sworne, to wife me to take,
Alas, what woman woll ye of me make?
I am a gentyl woman, and a queen,
Ye woll not fro your wife thus foule fleeen,
That I was borne alas, what shall I do?”

To tellen in short, this noble queen Dido
She seeketh halowes, and doth sacrifice,
She kneeleth, crieth, that routh is to devise,
Conjureth him, and profereth him to be
His thrall, his servaunt, in the best degre,
She falleth him to foot, and sowneth there,
Dischevile with her bright gilt heere,
And sayth, “Have mercy, let me with you ride,
These lordes, which that wonnen me beside,
Woll me destroyen only for your sake:
And ye woll me now to wife take,
As ye have sworne, than woll I yeve you leve
To sleen me with your swerd now sone at eve,
For than yet shall I dien as your wife,
I am with child, and yeve my child his life,
Mercy lord, have pitie in your thought.”
But all this thing availeth her right nought,
And as a traitour forthe gan to saile
Toward the large countrey of Itaile,
And thus hath he laft Dido in wo and pine,

And wedded there a ladie hight Lavine,
A cloth he laft, and eke his sword standing,
Whan he fro Dido stale in her sleeping,
Right at her beds head, so gan he hie,
Whan that he stale away to his navie.

Which cloth, whan selie Dido gan awake,
She hath it kist full oft for his sake,
And said, "O sweet cloth, while Jupiter it lost,
Take my soule, unbind me of this unrest,
I have fulfilled of fortune all the course,"
And thus alas, withouten his socourse,
Twentie time yswounded hath she than,
And whan that she unto her suster Anne
Complained had, of which I may not write,
So great routh I have it for to endite,
And bad her norice and her sustren gone
To fetchen fire, and other things anone,
And sayd that she would sacrifice,
And whan she might her time well aspie,
Upon the fire of sacrifice she start,
And with his sword she rofe her to the herte:
But as mine authour saith, yet this she seide,
Or she was hurt, beforne or she deide,
She wrote a letter anon, and thus began.

"Right so" (quod she) "as the white swan
Ayenst his death beginneth for to sing,
Right so to you I make my complaining,
Not that I trow to gotten you againe,
For well I wote it is all in vaine,
Sens that the gods ben contrarious to me,
But sin my name is lost through you" (quod she)
"I may well lese a word on you or letter,
Albeit I shall be never the better,
For thilke wind that blew your ship away,

The same wind hath blow away your fay,"
But who so woll all this letter have in mind,
Rede Ovide, and in him he shall it find.

THE

LEGEND OF HIPHIPHILE AND MEDEA.

THOU root of false lovers, duke Jason,
Thou sleer, devourer, and confusion
Of gentyl women, gentle creatures,
Thou madest thy reclaiming and thy lures
To ladies of thy scathliche apparaunce,
And of thy wordes farsed with pleasaunce,
And of thy fained trouth, and thy manere,
With thine obeysaunce and humble chere,
And with thine counterfeited paine and wo,
There other falsen one, thou falsed two,
O oft swore thou that thou wouldest die
For love, whan thou ne feltest maladie,
Save foule delite, which thou callest love,
If that I live, thy name shall be shove
In English, that thy deceit shall be know,
Have at thee Jason, now thine honor is blow,
But certes, it is both routh and wo,
That love with false lovers werketh so,
For they shall have well better love and chere
Than he that hath bought love full dere,
Or had in armes many a bloodie boxe,
For ever as tender a capon eateth the foxe,
Though he be fals, and hath the foule betraied,
As shall the good man that therefore paied,
Although he have to the capon skill and right,
The false foxe woll have his part at night.

On Jason this ensample is well yseene,
By Hipsiphile and Medea the queene.

In Thessalie, as Ovide telleth us,
There was a knight, that hight Peleus,
That had a brother, which that hight Eson,
And whan for age he might unnethes gon,
He yave to Peleus the governing
Of al his reign, and made him lord and king,
Of which Eson, this Jason gotten was,
That in his time in all that land there nas
Nat such a famous knight of gentillesse,
Of freedome, of strength, and of lustinesse,
After his fathers death he bare him so,
That there nas none that list ben his fo,
But did him all honour and companie,
Of which this Peleus hath great envie,
Imagining, that Jason might be
Enhaunsed so, and put in such degre,
With love of lordes of his region,
That from his reigne he may be put adoun,
And in his wit a night compassed he
How Jason might best destroyed be,
Withouten slaunder of his compasment:
And at the last he tooke avisement,
That to send him into some ferre countre,
There as this Jason may destroyed be,
This was his wit, all made he to Jason
Great chere of looke, and of affection,
For drede least his lords it espide,
So fell it, as fame ronnethe wide,
There was such tiding over all, and such loos,
That in an isle, that called was Colcos,
Beyond Troy eastward in the see,
That there was a ram, that men might see,

That had a flees of gold, that shone so bright,
That no where was there such another sight,
But it was kept alway with a dragoun,
And many other mervailles up and down,
And with two bulles maked all of bras,
That spitten fire, and much thing there was,
But this was eke the tale nathelees,
That who so would winnen thilke flees,
He must both, or he it winnen might,
With the buls and the dragon fight.

And king Otes lord was of that isle,
This Peleus bethought upon this wile,
That he his nephew Jason would exhort,
To sailen to that lond, him to disport,
And sayd, "Nephew, if it might bee,
That such worship might fall thee,
That thou this famous treasure might win,
And bring it my region within,
It were to me great pleasaunce and honour,
Than were I hold to quite thy labour,
And all thy costes I woll my selfe make,
And chose what folke thou wolt with thee take,
Let see now, darste thou taken this voyage."

Jason was yonge, and lustie of corage,
And undertooke to done this ilke emprise,
Anon Argus his ships gan devise.

With Jason went the strong Hercules,
And many another, that he with him ches,
But who so asketh, who is with him gon,
Let him rede Argonauticon,
For he woll tell a tale long ynough.
Philoctetes anon the saile up drough,
Whan the wind was good, and gan him hie
Out of his countrey, called Thessalie,

So long they sayled in the salt see,
Till in the isle of Lemnon arrived hee,
All be this nat rehearsed of Guido,
Yet saieth Ovide in his Epistles so,
And of this isle lady was and quene,
The faire yong Hipsiphile the shene,
That whilom Thoas doughter was the king.

Hipsiphile was gone in her playing,
And roming on the clevis by the see,
Under a banke anone espied she
Where lay the ship, that Jason gan arrive :
Of her goodnesse adoune she sendeth blive,
To weten, if that any straunge wight
With tempest thider were yblow anight,
To done him succour, as was her usaunce,
To furtheren every wight, and done pleasaunce
Of very bountie, and of courtesie.

This messenger adoune him gan to hie,
And found Jason and Hercules also,
That in a cogge to lond were ygo,
Hem to refreshen, and to take the aire.
The morning attempre was and faire,
And in hir way this messenger hem mette,
Full cunningly these lordes two he grette,
And did his message, asking hem anon
If that they were broken, or aught wo begon,
Or had need of lodesmen or vitaile,
For socoure they shoulde nothing faile,
For it was utterly the queenes will.

Jason answerde meekely and still :
“ My lady ” (quod he) “ thanke I hertely
Of her goodnesse, us needeth truly
Nothing as now, but that we weary be,
And come for to play out of the see,

Till that the wind be better in our way."

This lady rometh by the cliffe to play
With her meinie, endlong the strond,
And findeth this Jason and this other stound
In speaking of this thing, as I you told.

This Hercules and Jason gan behold
Howe that the queene it was, and faire her grete,
Anone right as they with this lady mete,
And she tooke heed, and knew by hir manere,
By hir array, by wordes, and by chere,
That it were gentyl men of great degree,
And to the castle with her leadeth she
These straunge folk, and doth hem great honour,
And asketh hem of travaile and of labour
That they have suffred in the salte see,
So that within a day two or three
She knew by the folke that in his shippes be,
That it was Jason full of renomee,
And Hercules, that had the great loos,
That soughten the adventures of Colcos,
And did hem honour more than before,
And with hem dealed ever longer the more,
For they ben worthy folke withouten lees,
And namely most she spake with Hercules,
To him her herte bare, he shoulde be
Sadde, wise, and true, of words avisee,
Withouten any other affection
Of love, or any other imagination.

This Hercules hath this Jason praised,
That to the Sunne he hath it up raised,
That halfe so true a man there n'as of love
Under the cope of Heaven, that is above,
And he was wise, hardie, secrete, and riche,
Of these three points, there nas none him liche,

Of freedome passed he, and lustyhead
All tho that liven, or ben dead,
Thereto so great a gentyl man was he,
And of Thessalye likely king to be,
There n'as no lacke, but that he was agast
To love, and for to speake shamefast,
Him had lever himselfe to murder and die,
Than that men should a lover him espie,
As would God that I had iyeve
My blood and flesh, so that I might live
With the bones, that he had aught where a wife
For his estate, for such a lustie life
She shoulde lede with this lustie knight.
And all this was compassed on the night
Betwixe him Jason, and this Hercules,
Of these two here was a shreud lees,
To come to house upon an innocent,
For to bedote this queene was hir entent :
And Jason is as coy as is a maid,
He looketh pitously, but naught he sayd
But freely yave he to her counsailers
Yeftes great, and to her officers,
As woulde God that I leyser had and time,
By processe, all his wrong for to rime :
But in this house, if any false lover be,
Right as himselfe now doth, right so did he,
With faining, and with every subtill dede,
Ye get no more of me, but ye woll rede
Th'originall, that telleth all the caas.

The sooth is this, that Jason wedded was
Unto this queene, and tooke of her substaunce
What so him list, unto his purveyaunce,
And upon her begate children two,
And drough his saile, and saw her never mo :

A letter sent she him certaine,
Which were too long to writen and to saine,
And him reproveth of his great untrouth,
And praieth him on her to have some routh,
And on his children two, she sayd him this,
That they be like of all thing ywis
To Jason, save they couth nat beguile,
And prayd God, or it were long while,
That she that had his herte yrest her fro,
Must finden him untrue also :
And that she must both her children spill,
And all tho that suffreth him his will :
And true to Jason was she all her life,
And ever kept her chast, as for his wife,
Ne never had she joy at her hart,
But died for his love of sorrowes smart.

To Colcos come is this duke Jason,
That is of love devourer and dragon,
As matire appeteth forme alway,
And from forme to forme it passen may,
Or as a well that were bottomles,
Right so can Jason have no pees,
For to desiren through his appetite,
To done with gentyl women his delite,
This is his lust, and his felicitie,
Jason is romed forth to the citie,
That whylome cleped was Jasonicos,
That was the master toune of all Colcos,
And hath ytold the cause of his comming
Unto Otes, of that countrey king,
Praying him that he must done his assay
To get the fleese of gold, if that he may,
Of which the king assenteth to his boone,
And doth him honour, as it is doone,

So ferforth, that his doughter and his heire,
Medea, which that was so wise and faire,
That fairer saw there never man with eie,
He made her done to Jason companie
At meat, and sitte by him in the hall.

Now was Jason a seemely man withall,
And like a lord, and had a great renoun,
And of his looke as royall as a lioun,
And godly of his speech, and famillere,
And coul of love all the craft and art plenere
Withouten booke, with everiche observaunce,
And as fortune her ought a foule mischaunce,
She woxe enamoured upon this man.

“Jason,” (quod she) “For ought I see or can,
As of this thing, the which ye ben about,
Ye and your selfe ye put in much dout,
For who so woll this aventure atcheve,
He may nat wele astarten as I leve,
Withouten death, but I his helpe be,
But nathelesse, it is my will,” (quod she)
“To forthren you, so that ye shall nat die,
But turnen sound home to your Thessalic.”

“My right lady,” (quod this Jason) “tho,
That ye have of my death or my wo
Any regard, and done me this honour,
I wot well, that my might, ne my labour,
May nat deserve it my lives day,
God thanke you, there I ñe can ne may,
Your man am I, and lowly you beseech
To ben my helpe, withouten more speech,
But certes for my death shall I not spare.”

Tho gan this Medea to him declare
The perill of this case, fro point to point
Of his batayle, and in what disjoint

He mote stonde, of which no creature
Save only she, ne might his life assure :
And shortely, right to the point for to go,
They ben accorded fully betwixe hem two,
That Jason shall her wedde, as trewe knight,
And terme yset to come soone at night
Unto her chambre, and make there his othe
Upon the goddes, that he for lefe or lothe
Ne shulde her never falsen night ne day,
To ben her husband whyle he live may,
As she that from his deth him saved here,
And here upon at night they mete yfere,
And doth his othe, and gothe with her to bedde,
And on the morow upward he him spedde,
For she hath taught him how he shall nat faile
The flees to winne, and stinten his bataile,
And saved him his life, and his honour,
And gate him a name, as a conquerour,
Right through the sleight of her enchantment,
Now hath Jason the fleese, and home is went
With Medea, and treasours fell great wonne,
But unwist of her father she is gonne
To Thessalie, with duke Jason her lefe,
That afterward hath broght her to mischeife,
For as a traytour he is from her go,
And with her left yonge children two,
And falsely hath betraied her, alas,
And ever in love a chefe traytour he was,
And wedded yet the thirde wife anon,
That was the doughter of king Creon.

This is the meede of loving and guerdon,
That Medea received of duke Jason
Right for her trouth, and for her kindnesse,
That loved him better than her selfe I gesse,

And left her father, and her heritage,
 And of Jason this is the vassalage,
 That in his dayes nas never none yfound
 So false a lover, going on the ground,
 And therfore in her letter thus she said,
 First whan she of his falsenesse him upbraid :
 “ Why liked thee my yellow haire to see,
 More than the boundes of mine honestie ?
 Why liked me thy youth and thy fairenesse,
 And of thy tong the infinite graciousnesse ?
 O haddest thou in thy conquest dead ybe,
 Ful mikel untrouth had there died with thee.”

Well can Ovide her letter in verse endite.
 Which were as now too long for to write.

THE

LEGEND OF LUCRECE OF ROME.

NOW mote I saine th'exiling of kings
 Of Rome, for hir horrible doings
 Of the last kinge Tarquinius,
 As saith Ovid, and Titus Livius,
 But for that cause tell I nat this storic,
 But for to praysen, and drawen in memorie
 The very wife, the very Lucesse,
 That for her wifehood, and her stedfastnesse,
 Nat only that these paynimis her commend,
 But that cleped is in our legend
 The great Austyn, that hath compassion
 Of this Lucrece that starfe in Rome toun,
 And in what wise I woll but shortly treat,
 And of this thing I touch but the great.

When Ardea besieged was about
With Romanes, that full sterne were and stout,
Full long lay the siege, and little wroughten,
So that they were halfe idle, as hem thoughten,
And in his play Tarquinius the yonge,
Gan for to yape, for he was light of tonge,
And said, that "it was an idle life,
No man did there no more than his wife,
And let us speke of wives that is best,
Praise every man his owne as him lest,
And with our speech let us ease our herte."

A knight (that hight Colatin) up stert,
And sayd thus, "Nay, sir, it is no nede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede:
I have a wife," (quod he) "that as I trow
Is holden good of all that ever her know,
Go we to Rome to night, and we shull see."
Tarquinius answerde, "That liketh mee."
To Rome they be comen, and fast hem dight
To Colatins house, and downe they light,
Tarquinius, and eke this Colatine,
The husbond knew the efters well and fine,
And full prively into the house they gone.
Nor at the gate porter was there none,
And at the chamber dore they abide:
This noble wife sate by her beds side
Discheveled, for no mallice she ne thought,
And soft wooll sayth Livie, that she wrought,
To kepe her from slouth and idlenesse,
And bad her servaunts done hir businesse,
And asketh hem, "What tidings heren ye?
How sayth men of the siege, how shall it be?
God would the wals were fallen adoun,
Mine husbond is too long out of this toun,

For which drede doth me sore to smert,
Right as a sword it stingeth to mine herte,
Whan I thinke on this or of that place,
God save my lord, I pray him for his grace:"
And therewithall so tenderly she gan weepe,
And of her werke she tooke no more keepe,
But meekely she let her eyen fall,
And thilke semblant sate her well withall,
And eke her teares full of heavinesse,
Embelessed her wifely chastnesse.
Her countenaunce is to her herte digne,
For they acordeden in deed and signe,
And with that word her husband Colatin,
Or she of him was ware, came sterling in,
And said, "Drede thee nat, for I am here,"
And she anone up rose, with blisfull chere,
And kissed him, as of wives is the wonne.

Tarquinius, this proud kings sone
Conceived hath her beautie and her chere,
Her yellow haire, her bountie, and her manere,
Her hew, her words, that she hath complained,
And by no craft her beautie was nat fained.
And caught to this lady such desire,
That in his herte he brent as any fire,
So woodly, that his wit was all forgotten,
For well thought he she should nat be gotten,
And aye the more he was in dispaire,
The more coveiteth, and thought her faire,
His blind lust was all his coveiting.
On morrow, whan the bird began to sing,
Unto the siege he commeth full prively,
And by himselfe he walketh soberly,
The image of her recording alway new,
Thus lay her hair, and thus fresh was her hew,

Thus sate, thus span, this was her chere,
Thus fair she was, and this was her manere :
All this conceit his herte hath new ytake,
And as the see, with tempest all to shake,
That after whan the storme is all ago,
Yet woll the water quappe a day or two,
Right so, though that her forme were absent,
The pleasaunce of her forme was present,
But nathelesse, nat pleasaunce, but delite,
Or an unrightfull talent with dispite,
“ For maugre her, she shall my lemman be :
Hap helpeth hardy man alway,” (quod he)
“ What end that I make, it shall be so,”
And girt him with his sword, and gan to go,
And he forthright, till to Rome he come,
And all alone his way that he hath nome,
Unto the house of Colatin full right,
Doun was the Sunne, and day hath lost his light,
And in he come, unto a privie halke,
And in the night full theefely gan he stalke,
Whan every wight was to his rest brought,
Ne no wight had of treason such a thought,
Whether by window, or by other gin,
With swerd ydraw, shortly he commeth in
There as she lay, this noble wife Lucesse,
And as she woke, her bedde she felt presse :
“ What beast is that,” (quod she) “ that wayeth
“ I am the kings sonne Tarquinius,” [thus ?
(Quod he) “ but and thou crie, or any noise make,
Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke God, that formed man of live,
This swerd through thine herte shall I rive,”
And therwitball unto her throte he stert,
And set the swerd all sharpe on her herte :

No word she spake, she hath no might therto,
What shall she saine, her wit is all ago,
Right as whan a wolfe findeth a lamb alone,
To whom shall she complaine or make mone :
What, shall she fight with an hardy knight,
Well wote men a woman hath no might :
What, shall she crie, or how shall she astert,
That hath her by the throte, with swerd at herte ?
She asketh grace, and said all that she can.

“ No wolt thou nat,” (quod this cruell man)
“ As wisely Jupiter my soule save,
I shall in thy stable slee thy knave,
And lay him in thy bed, and loud crie,
That I thee find in such avoutrie,
And thus thou shalt be dead, and also lese
Thy name, for thou shalt nat chese.”
This Romans wives loveden so her name
At thilke time, and dreden so the shame,
That what for fere of slander, and drede of death
She lost both at ones wit and breath,
And in a swough she lay, and woxe so dead,
Men mighten smite off her arme or head,
She feleth nothing, neither foule ne faire.

Tarquinius, that art a kings heire,
And shouldest as by linage and by right
Done as a lord, and a very knight,
Why hast thou done dispite to chivalrie ?
Why hast thou done this lady villanie ?
Alas, of thee this was a villanous dede,
But now to the purpose, in the story I rede,
Whan he was gon, and this mischaunce is fall,
This lady sent after her friendes all,
Father, mother, and husbond, all yfere,
And discheveled with her haire clere,

In habite such as women used tho
Unto the burying of hir frends go,
She sate in hall, with a sorowfull sight,
Her friends asken what her aylen might,
And who was dead, and she sate aye weeping,
A word for shame ne may she forth out bring,
Ne upon hem she durst nat behold,
But at the last of Tarquiny she hem told
This ruffall case, and all this thing horrible,
The wo to tell were impossible
That she and all her friends make at ones,
All had folkes hertes ben of stones,
It might have maked hem upon her rew,
Her herte was so wifely and so trew,
She said, that for her gilt ne for her blame
Her husbond should nat have the foule name,
That would she nat suffren by no way:
And they answerde all unto her fay,
That they foryave it her, for it was right,
It was no gilt, it lay nat in her might,
And saiden her ensamples many one,
But all for naught, for thus she said anone:
“Be as be may,” (quod she) “of forgiving,
I will nat have no forgift for nothing,”
But prively she cought forth a knife,
And therwithall she raft her selfe her life,
And as she fell adowne she cast her looke,
And of her clothes yet heed she tooke,
For in her falling yet she had a care,
Least that her feet or such things lay bare,
So well she loved cleannesse, and eke trouth,
Of her had all the towne of Rome routh,
And Brutus hath by her chast blood swore,
That Tarquin should ybanished be therfore,

And all his kinne, and let the people call,
 And openly the tale he told hem all,
 And openly let carry her on a bere
 Through all the town, that men may see and here
 The horrible deed of her oppressioun,
 Ne never was there king in Rome toun
 Sens thilke day, and she was holden there
 A saint, and ever her day yhallowed dere,
 As in hir law : and thus endeth Lucesse
 The noble wife, Titus beareth witnesse :
 I tell it, for she was of love so trew,
 Ne in her will she chaunged for no new,
 And in her stable herte, sadde and kind,
 That in these women men may all day find
 There as they cast hir herte, there it dwelleth,
 For well I wote, that Christ himselfe telleth,
 That in Israel, as wide as is the lond,
 That so great faith in all the lond he ne foud,
 As in a woman, and this is no lie,
 And as for men, looke ye such tyrannie
 They doen all day, assay hem who so list,
 The truest is full brotell for to trist.

THE

LEGEND OF ARIADNE OF ATHENS.

JUDGE infernall Minos, of Crete king,
 Now commeth thy lot, thou comdest on the
 ring,
 Nat for thy sake only written is this storic,
 But for to clepe ayen unto memorie,
 Of Theseus the great untrouth of love,
 For which the gods of Heaven above

Ben wroth, and wrath have take for thy sinne,
Be red for shame, now I thy life beginne.

Minos, that was the mighty king of Crete,
That had an hundred cities strong and grete,
To schoole hath sent his sonne Androgeus
To Athens, of the which it happed thus,
That he was slaine, learning phylosophie,
Right in that citie, nat but for envie.

The great Minos, of the which I speke,
His sonnes death is come for to wreke,
Alcathoe he besieged hard and long,
But nathelesse, the walles be so strong,
And Nisus, that was king of that cite,
So chivalrous, that little dredeth he,
Of Minos or his host tooke he no cure,
Till on a day befell an aventure,
That Nisus doughter stood upon the wall,
And of the siege saw the manner all:
So happed it, that at scarmishing,
She cast her herte upon Minos the king,
For his beaute, and his chevalrie,
So sore, that she wende for to die.
And shortly of this processe for to pace,
She made Minos winnen thilke place,
So that the citie was all at his will,
To saven whom him list, or els spill,
But wickedly he quit her kindnesse,
And let her drench in sorrow and distresse,
N'ere that the gods had of her pite,
But that tale were too long as now for me.
Athenes wan this king Minos also,
As Alcathoe, and other townes mo,
And this the effect, that Minos hath so driven
Hem of Athenes, that they mote him yeven

Fro yere to yere her owne children dere
For to be slaine, as ye shall after here.

This Minos hath a monster, a wicked best,
That was so cruell, that without areest,
Whan that a man was brought into his presenee,
He would him eat, there helpeth no defence:
And every third yeare withouten dout,
They casten lotte, as it came about,
On rich and poore, he must his sonne take,
And of his childe he must present make
To Minos, to save him or to spill,
Or let his beast devour him at his will.
And this hath Minos done right in despite,
To wreke his sonne was set all his delite,
And make hem of Athenes his thrall
Fro yere to yere, while he liven shall.
And home he saileth whan this toun is wonne,
This wicked custome is so long yronne,
Till of Athenes king Egeus
Mote senden his owne sonne Theseus,
Sens that the lotte is fallen him upon
To ben devoured, for grace is there non.
And forth is ladde this wofull yonge knight
Unto the country of king Minos full of might,
And in a prison fettred fast is he,
Till the time he should yfreten be.

Well maist thou wepe, O wofull Theseus,
That art a kings sonne, and damned thus,
Me thinketh this, that thou art depe yhold
To whom that saved thee fro cares cold,
And now if any woman helpe thee,
Well oughtest thou her servaunt for to bee,
And ben her true lover yere by yere,
But now to come ayen to my matere.

The toure, there this Theseus is throw,
Down in the bottome derk, and wonder low,
Was joyning to the wall of a foreine,
Longing unto the doughtren tweine
Of Minos that in hir chambers grete
Dwelten above the maister strete
Of the towne, in joy and in sollas :
Not I n'at how it happed percaas,
As Theseus complained him by night,
The kings doughter, that Ariadne hight,
And eke her suster Phedra, herden all
His complaint, as they stood on the wall,
And looked upon the bright Moone,
Hem list nat to go to bed so soone :
And of his wo they had compassion,
A kings sonne to be in such prison,
And ben devoured, thought hem great pite :
Than Ariadne spake to her suster free,
And said : “ Phedra lefe suster dere,
This wofull lords sonne may ye nat here,
How pitously he complaineth his kin,
And eke his poore estate that he is in ?
And guiltlesse, certes now it is routh,
And if ye woll assent, by my trouth,
He shall ben holpen, how so that we do.”

Phedra answerde, “ Ywis me is as wo
For him, as ever I was for any man,
And to his helpe the best rede I can,
Is, that we done the gailer prively
To come and speke with us hastely,
And done this wofull man with him to come,
For if he may this monster overcome,
Than were he quit, there is none other boot,
Let us well taste him at his herte root,

That if so be that he a weapon have,
Where that he his life dare kepe or save,
Fighten with this fiend, and him defend,
For in the prison, here as he shall disceend,
Ye wote well, that the beast is in a place
That is not derke, and hath rounge and eke space
To welde an axe, or swerde, staffe, or knife,
So that me thinketh he should save his life,
If that he be a man, he shall do so :
And we shall make him balles eke also
Of wexe and towe, that whan he gapeth fast,
Into the beestes throte he shall hem cast,
To sleke his hunger, and encomber his teeth,
And right anon whan that Theseus seeth
The beest achekeed, he shall on him leepe
To sleen him, or they comen more to keepe :
This weapon shal the gailer, or that tide,
Full prively within the prison hide :
And for the house is crenceled to and fro,
And hath so queint waies for to go,
For it is shapen as the mase is wrought,
Thereto have I a remedy in my thought,
That by a clewe of twine, as he hath gon,
The same way he may returne anon,
Folowing alway the threde, as he hath come,
And whan this beest is overcome,
Than may he flien away out of this stede,
And eke the gailer may he with him lede,
And him avaunce at home in his countre,
Sens that so great a lordes sonne is he."

This is my rede, if that ye dare it take,
What shold I lenger sermon of it make,
The gailer cometh, and with him Theseus,
Whan these things ben accorded thus.

Downe sate Theseus upon his knee,
“ The right lady of my life,” (quod he)
“ I sorowfull man, ydamned to the deth :
Fro you, whiles that me lasteth breth,
I wol nat twinne, after this aventure,
But in your service, thus I woll endure,
That as a wretch unknow, I woll you serve
For evermore, till that mine herte sterve,
Forsake I woll at home mine heritage,
And as I said, ben of your court a page,
If that ye vouchsafe that in this place,
Ye graunt me to have soche a grace,
That I may have nat but my meate and drinke,
And for my sustinaunce yet woll I swinke,
Right as you list, that Minos ne no wight,
Sens that he saw me never with eyen sight,
Ne no man else shall me espie,
So slyly, and so well I shal me grie,
And me so wel disfigure, and so low,
That in this world there shall no man me know,
To have my life, and to have presence
Of you, that done to me this excellence,
And to my father shall I sende here,
This worthy man, that is your gaylere,
And him so guerdon, that he shall well be
One of the greatest men of my countre,
And if I durst saine, my lady bright,
I am a kings sonne and eke a knight
As wold God, if that it might be,
Ye weren in my countrey all thre,
And I with you, to beare you companie,
Than shuld ye sene if that I thereof lie,
And if that I profer you in lowe manere,
To ben your page, and serven you right here,

But I you serve as lowly in that place,
I pray to Mars to yeve me suche grace,
That shames death on me there mote fall,
And death and poverté to my frends all,
And that my sprite by night mote go,
After my death, and walke to and fro,
That I mote of traitour have a name,
For which my sprit mote go, to do me shame,
And if I clayme ever other degree,
But ye vouchsafe to yeve it mee,
As I have said, of shames death I dey,
And mercy, lady, I can naught else sey."

A semely knight was this Theseus to see,
And yonge, but of twenty yere and three,
But whoso had ysene his countenance,
He wold have wept, for routh of his penance :
For which this Ariadne in this manere,
Answerde to his profre and to his chere.

"A kings sonne, and eke a knight," (quod she)
"To ben my servaunt in so lowe degree,
God shilde it, for the shame of women all,
And lene me never soch a case befall,
And sende you grace, and sleight of herte also
You to defend, and knightly to sleen your foe,
And lene hereafter I may you find
To me, and to my suster here so kind,
That I ne repent nat to yeve you life,
Yet were it better I were your wife,
Sith ye ben as gentill borne as I,
And have a realme nat but fast by,
Than that I suffred your gentillesse to sterve,
Or that I let you as a page serve,
It is no profite, as unto your kinrede,
But what is that, that man wold nat do for dred,

And to my suster sith that it is so,
That she mote gone with me, if that I go,
Or els suffre death as wel as I,
That ye unto your sonne as trewly,
Done her be wedded, at your home coming,
This is the finall end of all this thing,
Ye swere it here, upon all that may be sworne?"

"Ye lady mine," (quod he) "or els to torne
Mote I be with the Minotaure or to morrow,
And haveth here of mine herte blood to borow,
If that ye woll, if I had knife or speare,
I would it letten out, and thereon sweare,
For than at erste, I wot ye would me leve,
By Mars, that is chiefe of my beleve,
So that I might liven, and nat faile
To morow for to taken my bataile,
I nolde never fro this place flie,
Till that ye should the very professe,
For now, if that the soth I shall you say,
I have loved you full many a day,
Though ye ne wist nat, in my countre,
And aldermost desired you to see,
Of any earthly living creature,
Upon my truth I sweare and you assure,
This seven yere I have your servaunt be,
Now have I you, and also have ye me,
My dere herte, of Athenes duchesse."

This lady smileth at his stedfastnesse,
And at his hertely wordes, and at his chere,
And to her suster said in this manere :

"And sothly suster mine," (quod she)
"Now be we duchesses both I and ye,
And sikerde to the regals of Athenes,
And both hereafter likely to be queenes,

And saved fro his death a kings sonne,
As ever of gentill women is the wounne,
To save a gentil man, enforth hir might,
In honest cause, and namely in his right,
Me thinketh no wight ought us herof blame,
Ne bearen us therefore an yvel name,"
And shortly of this mater for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leave ytake,
And every point was performed in dede,
As ye have in this covenannt herde me rede,
His wepen, his clewe, his thing that I have said,
Was by the gailer in the house ylaide,
There as the Minotaure hath his dwelling,
Right fast by the dore, at his entring,
And Theseus is lad unto his dethe,
And forth unto this Minotaure he gethe,
And by the teaching of this Adriane,
He overcame this beest, and was his bane,
And out he cometh by the clewe againe
Ful prively, whan he this beest hath skaine,
And the gailer gotten hath a barge,
And of his wives treasure gan it charge,
And toke his wife, and eke her suster free,
And by the gailer, and with hem al three
Is stole away out of the lond by night,
And to the countre of Enupie him dight,
There as he had a frende of his knowing,
There feesten they, there daunsen they and sing.
And in his armes hath this Adriane,
That of the beest hath kept him fro his bane,
And get him there a noble barge anone,
And of his countrey folke a ful great wone,
And taketh his leave, and homeward saileth hee,
And in an yle, amidde the wilde see,

There as there dwelt creature none,
Save wild beestes, and that full many one,
He made his shippe a londe for to sette,
And in that yle halfe a day he lette,
And said, that on the londe he must him rest.
His mariners have done right as him lest,
And for to tell shortly in this caas,
Whan Ariadne his wife a slepe was,
For that her suster fayrer was than she,
He taketh her in his honde, and forth goeth he
To ship, and as a traitour stale away,
While that this Ariadne a slepe lay,
And to his countrey warde he sailed blive,
A twenty divel way, the winde him drive,
And found his father drenched in the see.
Me liste no more to speke of him parde,
These false lovers, poison be hir bane.

But I wol turne againe to Adriane,
That is with slepe for werinesse ytake,
Ful sorowfully her herte may awake.

Alas, for thee mine herte hath pite,
Right in the dawning awaketh she,
And gropeth in the bed, and fond right nought :

“Alas,” (quod she) “that ever I was wrought,
I am betrayed,” and her heere to rent,
And to the stronde barefote fast she went,
And cried : “Theseus mine herte swete,
Where be ye, that I may nat with you mete ?
And might thus with beestes ben yslaine.”

The holowe rockes answerde her againe,
No man she saw, and yet shone the Moone,
And hic upon a rocke she went soone,
And sawe his barge sayling in the see,
Cold woxe her herte, and right thus said she :

“Meker then ye find I the beestes wilde.”
 Hath he nat sinne, that he her thus begilde?
 She cried, “O turne againe for routhe and sinne,
 Thy barge hath nat all his meinie in,”
 Her kerchefe on a pole sticked she,
 Ascaunce he should it wel yse,
 And him remembre that she was behind,
 And turne againe, and on the stronde her find.

But all for naught, his way he is gone,
 And downe she fel a swowne on a stone,
 And up she riste, and kissed in all her care
 The steppes of his feete, there he hath fare,
 And to her bed right thus she speketh tho :

“Thoubed,”(quod she)“that hast received two,
 Thou shalt answere of two, and not of one,
 Where is the greater parte, away gone ?

“Alas, wher shal I wretched wight become ?
 For though so be that bote none here come,
 Home to my countrey dare I nat for drede,
 I can my selfe in this case nat rede.”

What should I tell more her complaining,
 It is so long, it were an heavy thing ?
 In her epistle, Naso telleth all,
 But shortly to the end tell I shall,
 The goddes have her holpen for pite,
 And in the signe of Taurus men may see,
 The stones of her crowne shine clere,
 I will no more speake of this matere,
 But thus this false lover can begile
 His trew love, the diuel quite him his wile.

THE LEGEND OF PHILOMENE.

THOU yever of the formes, that hast wrought
The fayre world, and bare it in thy thought
Eternally, er thou thy werke began,
Why madest thou unto the slaunder of man,
Or all be that it was not thy doing,
As for that end to make suche a thing,
Why suffiredest thou that Tereus was bore,
That is in love so false and so forswore,
That fro this world up to the first Heven,
Corrumpeth, whan that folke his name neven ?
And as to me, so grisly was his dede,
That whan that I this foule storie rede,
Mine eyen wexen foule, and sore also,
Yet lasteth the venime of so longe ago,
That enfecteth him that wolde behold
The storie of Tereus, of which I told,
Of Trace was he lord, and kin to Marte
The cruel god that stante with bloody darte,
And wedded had he with blisfull chere
King Pandionis faire doughter dere,
That hight Progne, floure of her countre,
Though Juno list not at the feast be,
Ne Hymeneus, that god of wedding is,
But at the feast ready ben ywis,
The furies three, with all hir mortall bronde,
The oule all night above the balkes wonde,
That prophete is of wo, and of mischaunce,
This revell, full of song, and full of daunce,
Last a fourtenight, or little lasse,
But shortly of this storie for to passe,

(For I am weary of him for to tell)
Five yere his wife and he together dwell,
Till on a day she gan so sore long
To seene her suster, that she saw not long,
That for desire she n'ist what to say,
But to her husbond gan she for to pray
For Gods love, that she mote ones gone
Her suster for to seene, and come ayen anone,
Or else but she mote to her wend,
She praied him that he would after her send :
And this was day by day all her prayere,
With al humblesse of wifhood, word and chere.

This Tereus let make his ships yare,
And into Grece himselfe is forth yfare,
Unto his father in law gan he pray,
To vouchsafe, that for a moneth or tway,
That Philomene his wives suster might
On Progne his wife but ones have a sight,
“ And she shall come to you again anon
My selfe with her, I will both come and gon,
And as my hertes life I will her kepe.”

This old Pandion, this king gan wepe
For tendernesse of herte, for to leve
His doughter gon, and for to yeve her leve,
Of all this world he loved nothing so,
But at the last, leave hath she to go,
For Philomene with salt teares eke
Gan of her father grace to beseke,
To seene her suster, that her longeth so,
And him enbraceth, with her armes two,
And there also yong and faire was she,
That whan that Tereus saw her beaute,
And of array, that there was none her liche,
And yet of beautie was she to so riche,

He cast his fierie herte upon her so,
That he woll have her, how so that it go,
And with his wiles kneled, and so praied,
Till at the last Pandion thus saied.

“Nowsonne,” (quod he) “that art to me so dere,
I thee betake my yong doughter dere,
That beareth the key of all mine hertes life,
And grete well my doughter, and thy wife,
And yeve her leave sometime for to pley,
That she may seen me ones or I deie.”

And sothly he hath made him riche feast,
And to his folke, the most and eke the least,
That with him came : and yave him yefte great,
And him conveieth through the master streat
Of Athenes, and to the sea him brought,
And tourneth home, no malice he ne thought.
The ores pulleth forth the vessell fast,
And into Tracc arriveth at the last,
And up in to a forest he her led,
And to a cave prively he him sped,
And in this darke cave, if her lest
Or list nought, he had her for to rest,
Of which her herte agrose, and saied thus :

“ Where is my suster, brother Tereus ? ”
And therewithall she wept tenderly,
And quoke for feare, pale and pitiously,
Right as the lambe, that of the wolfe is bitten,
Or as the culver, that of the egle is smitten,
And is out of his claws forth escaped,
Yet it is aferde, and awaped,
Lest it be hent eftsones : so sate she,
But utterly it may none other be,
By force hath this traitour done a deede,
That he hath reft her of her maidenhede,
Maugre her head, by strength and by his might.

Lo here a deede of men, and that aright.
She crieth "Suster," with full loude steven,
And "Father dere, helpe me God in Heven:"
All helpeth not, and yet this false thefe,
Hath done this lady yet a more mischefe,
For feare lest she should his shame crie,
And done him openly a villanie,
And with his sweard her tong of kerfe he,
And in a castell made her for to be,
Full prively in prison evermore,
And kept her to his usage and to his store,
So that she ne might never more astarte.
O sely Philomene, wo is in thine herte,
Huge been thy sorowes, and wonder smart,
God wreke thee, and sende thee thy boone,
Now is time I make an end soone,

This Tereus is to his wife ycome,
And in his armes hath his wife ynome,
And pitiously he wept, and shoke his hedde,
And swore her, that he found her suster dedde.
For which this selie Progne hath soch wo,
That nigh her sorowfull herte brake a two.
And thus in teares let I Progne dwell,
And of her suster forth I woll you tell.

This wofull lady ylearned had in youth,
So that she worken and enbrauden couth,
And weaven in stole the radevore,
As it of women hath be woved yore,
And sothly for to saine, she hath her fill
Of meate and drinke, of clothing at her will,
And couthe eke rede well ynough and endite,
But with a penne she could not write,
But letters can she weave to and fro,
So that by the yere was all ago,
She had woven in a flames large,

How she was brought fro Athens in a barge,
And in a cave how that she was brought,
And all the thing that Tereus wrought,
She wave it wel, and wrote the storie above,
How she was served for her susters love.
And to a man a ring she yave anon,
And praied him by signes for to gon
Unto the queene, and bearen her that clothe,
And by signe swore many an othe,
She should him yeve what she gotten might.

This man anon unto the quene him dight,
And toke it her, and all the maner told,
And whan that Progne hath this thing behold,
No worde she spake, for sorow and eke for rage,
But fained her to gon on pilgrimage
To Baccus temple, and in a little stound
Her dombe suster sitting hath she found
Weeping in the castell her selfe alone,
Alas the wo, constraint, and the mone
That Progne upon her dombe suster maketh,
In armes everich of hem other taketh,
And thus I let hem in hir sorow dwell,
The remnaunt is no charge to tell,
For this is all and some, thus was she served
That never agilte, ne deserved
Unto this cruell man, that she of wist.
Ye may beware of men if that you list,
For all be that he woll not for shame
Doen as Tereus, to lese his name,
Ne serve you as a murtherer or a knave,
Full little while shall ye trew him have,
That wol I sain, al were he now my brother,
But it so be that he may have another.

THE
LEGENDE OF PHILLIS.

By prove, as well as by auctorite,
That wicked fruite commeth of a wicked tree,
That may ye find, if that it liketh you,
But for this end, I speake this as now,
To tell you of false Demophon,
In love a falser heard I never non,
But it were his father Theseus,
God for his grace fro soch one kepe us,
Thus these women praien, that it here,
Now to the effect tourne I of my matere.

Destroied is of Troie the citee,
This Demophon came sayling in the see
Toward Athenes, to his paleis large,
With him came many a ship, and many a barge
Full of folke, of which full many one
Is wounded sore, and sicke, and wo begone,
And they have at the seige long ylaine,
Behind him came a winde, and eke a raine,
That shofe so sore, his saile might not stonde,
Him were lever than all the world a londe,
So hunted him the tempest to and fro,
So darke it was, he could no where go,
And with a wave brusten was his sterc,
His ship was rent so lowe, in such manere,
That carpenter could it not amende,
The see by night as any torche brende,
For wood, and posseth him up and down,
Till Neptune hath of him compassioun,
And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they all,

And maden him up a londe to fall,
Wherof that Phillis lady was and queene,
Lycurgus doughter, fairer unto seene
Than is the floure again the bright Sonne,
Unneth is Demophon to londe ywonne,
Weake and eke werie, and his folke forpined
Of werinesse, and also enfamined,
And to the death he was almost ydriven,
His wise folke consaile have him yeven,
To seken helpe and succour of the queene,
And loken what his grace might bene,
And maken in that lande some chevesaunce,
And kepen him fro wo, and fro mischaunce,
For sicke he was, and almost at the death,
Unneth might he speake, or drawe breath,
And lieth in Rhodopeia him for to rest,
Whan he may walk, him thought it was best
Unto the countrey to seeken for succour,
Men knew him wele, and did him honour,
For at Athenes duke and lord was he,
As Theseus his father hath ybe,
That in his time was great of renoun,
No man so great in all his regioun,
And like his father of face and of stature,
And false of love, it came him of nature,
As doth the foxe Renarde, the foxes sonne,
Of kinde he coulde his old father wonne
Without lore, as can a drake swimme
Whan it is caught, and carried to the brimme :
This honorable queen Phillis doth him chere,
Her liketh well his sporte and his manere,
But I am agroted here beforne,
To write of hem that in love been forsworne,
And eke to haste me in my legende,
Which to performe, God me grace sende,

Therefore I passe shortly in this wise,
 Ye have well heard of Theseus the gise,
 In the betraiung of faire Adriane,
 That of her pitee kept him fro his bane,
 At short wordes, right so Demophon,
 The same way, and the same pathe hath gon
 That did his false father Theseus,
 For unto Phillis hath he sworne thus,
 To wedden her, and her his trouth plight,
 And piked of her all the good he might,
 Whan he was hole and sound, and had his rest,
 And doth with Phillis what so that him lest,
 As well I could, if that me list so,
 Tellen all his doing to and fro.

He sayd to his countrey mote him saile,
 For there he would her wedding apparaile,
 As fill to her honour, and his also,
 And openly he tooke his leave tho,
 And to her swore he would not sojourne,
 But in a month again he would retourne,
 And in that londe let make this ordinaunce,
 As very lorde, and tooke the obeisaunce,
 Well and humbly, and his shippes dight,
 And home he goeth the next way he might,
 For unto Phillis yet came he nought,
 And that hath she so harde and sore ybought,
 Alas, as the storic doth us record,
 She was her owne death with a corde,
 Whan that she saw that Demophon her traied.
 But first wrote she to him, and fast him praied
 He would come, and deliver her of pain,
 As I rehearse shall a worde or twain,
 Me liste not vouchsafe on him to swinke,
 Dispenden on him a penne full of ynke,
 For false in love was he, right as his sire,

The Devill set hir soules both on a fire,
But of the letter of Phillis woll I write,
A worde or twain, although it be but lite.

“Thine hostesse” (quod she) “O Demophon,
Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon,
Of Rhodopeie, upon you mote complain,
Over the terme set betwixt us twain,
That ye ne holden forward, as ye sayd :
Your ancre, which ye in our haven layd,
Hight us, that ye would comen out of doubt,
Or that the Moone ones went about,
But times fower, the Moone hath hid her face
Sens thilke day ye went fro this place,
And fower times light the world again,
But for all that, yet shall I sothly sain,
Yet hath the streme of Scythion not brought
From Athenes the ship, yet came it nought,
And if that ye the terme reken would,
As I or other true lovers doe should,
I plain not (God wot) before my day.”
But al her letter writen I ne may,
By order, for it were to me a charge,
Her letter was right long, and therto large,
But here and there, in rime I have it layd
There as me thought that she hath wel sayd.

She sayd, “The sailes commeth not again,
Ne to the word there n’is no fey certain,
But I wot why ye come not” (quod she)
“For I was of my love to you so fre,
And of the goddes that ye have sworn,
That hir vengeance fall on you therfore,
Ye be not suffisaunt to beare the pain,
Too moche trusted I, well may I sain,
Upon your linage, and your faire tong,
And on your teares falsely out wrong,

How coulde ye wepe so by craft?" (quod she)

"May there suche teares fained be?

Now certes if ye would have in memory,
It ought be to you but little glory,
To have a sely maide thus betrayed,
To God" (quod she) "pray I, and oft have prayed,
That it be now the greatest price of all,
And most honour that ever you shall befall,
And whan thine old aunceters painted bee,
In which men may hir worthinesse see,
Than pray I God, thou painted be also,
That folke may reden, forth by as they go.

"Lo this is he, that with his flattery
Betraied hath, and done her villany,
That was his true love, in thought and drede.

"But sothly of o point yet may they rede,
That ye been like your father, as in this,
For he begiled Ariadne ywis,
With such an arte, and such subtelte,
As thou thy selven hast begiled me:
As in that poinct, although it be not feire,
Thou folowest certain, and art his heire.
But sens thus sinfully ye me begile,
My body mote ye sene, within a while
Right in the haven of Athenes fleeing,
Withouten sepulture and burying,
Though ye been harder than is any stone."

And whan this letter was forth sent anone,
And knew how brotell and how fals he was,
She for dispaire fordid her selfe, alas,
Such sorow hath she, for he beset her so.
Beware ye women of your subtill fo,
Sens yet this day men may ensample se,
And trusteth now in love no man but me.

THE

LEGENDE OF HYPERMESTRE.

IN Grece whilom were brethren two
Of which that one was called Danao,
That many a son hath of his body wonne,
As such false lovers ofte conne.

Emong his sonnes all there was one,
That aldermost he loved of everychone,
And whan this child was borne, this Danao
Shope him a name, and called him Lino,
That other brother called was Egiste,
That was of love as false as ever him liste,
And many a daughter gate he in his life,
Of which he gate upon his right wife,
A doughter dere, and did her for to call,
Hypermestra, yongest of hem all,
The which child of her nativite,
To all good thewes borne was she,
As liked to the goddes or she was borne,
That of the shefe she should be the corne,
The werdes that we clepen destine,
Hath shapen her, that she must needes be
Pitous, sad, wise, true as stele,
And to this woman it accordeth wele,
For though that Venus yave her great beaute,
With Jupiter compowned so was she,
That conscience, trouth, and drede of shame,
And of her wifehode for to kepe her name,
This thought her was felicite as here,
And reed Mars, was that time of the yere
So feble, that his malice is him raft,

Repressed hath Venus his cruell craft,
And what with Venus, and other oppression
Of houses, Mars his venime is adon,
That Hypermestre dare not handle a knife,
In malice, though she should lese her life,
But nathelesse, as Heaven gan tho turne,
Two bad aspectes hath she of Saturne,
That made her to die in prison,
And I shall after make mencion,
Of Danao and Egistes also,
And though so be that they were brethren two,
For thilke tyme n'as spared no linage,
It liked hem to maken mariage
Betwixt Hypermestre, and him Lino,
And casten soch a day it shall be so,
And full accorded was it utterly,
The aray is wrought, the time is fast by,
And thus Lino hath of his fathers brother,
The doughter wedded, and ech of hem hath other,
The torches brennen, and the lamps bright
The sacrifice been full ready dight,
Th'ensence out of the fire reketh soote,
The floure, the leef, is rent up by the roote,
To maken garlandes and crownes hie,
Full is the place of sound of minstralcie,
Of songes amourous of mariage,
As thilke tyme was the plain usage,
And this was in the paleis of Egiste,
That in his hous was lord, right as him liste,
And thus that day they driven to an end,
The frendes taken leve, and home they wend,
The night is come, the bride shall go to bed,
Egiste to his chamber fast him sped,
And prively let his doughter call,
Whan that the house voided was of hem all,

He looked on his doughter with glad chere,
And to her spake, as ye shall after here.

“ My right doughter, tresour of mine herte,
Sens first that day, that shapen was my shert,
Or by the fatall suster had my dome,
So nie mine herte never thing ne come,
As thou Hypermestre, doughter dere,
Take hede what thy father sayth thee here,
And werke after thy wiser ever mo,
For alderfirst doughter I love thee so,
That all the world to me n’is halfe so lefe,
Ne n’olde rede thee to thy mischefe,
For all the good under the cold Mone,
And what I meane, it shall be said right sone,
With protestacion, as sain these wise,
That but thou doe, as I shall thee devise,
Thou shalt be ded, by him that all hath wrought,
At short wordes thou ne scapest nought
Out of my paleis, or that thou be deed,
But thou consent, and werke after my reed,
Take this to the fearfull conclusioun.”

This Hypermestre cast her eyen down,
And quoke as doth the leefe of ashe grene,
Deed wext her hew, and like ashen to sene,
And sayd: “ Lord and father all your will,
After my might, God wote I will fulfill,
So it be to me no confusion.”

“ I n’ill” (quod he) “ have none excepcion,”
And out he caught a knife, as rasour kene,
“ Hide this” (quod he) “ that it be not ysene,
And whan thine husbond is to bed go,
While that he slepeth cut his throte atwo,
For in my dreame it is warned me,
How that my nevewe shall my bane be,
But which I n’ot, wherfore I woll be siker,

If thou say nay, we two shall have a bicker,
As I have sayd, by him that I have sworn."
This Hiperestre hath nigh her wit forlorn,
And for to passen harmelesse out of that place,
She graunted him, there was none other grace:
And withall a costrell taketh he tho
And sayd, " Hereof a draught or two,
Yeve him drinke, whan he goeth to rest,
And he shal slepe as long as ever thee lest,
The narcotikes and apies been so strong,
And go thy way, lest that him thinke to long."
Out cometh the bride, and with full sobre chere,
As is of maidens oft the manere,
To chamber brought with revel and with song,
And shortly, leste this tale be to long,
This Lino and she beth brought to bed,
And every wight out at the doore him sped,
The night is wasted, and he fell aslepe,
Full tenderly beginneth she to weepe,
She rist her up, and dredfully she quaketh,
As doth the braunch, that Zephirus shaketh,
And husht were all in Argone that citee,
As cold as any frost now wexeth shee,
For pite by the herte strained her so,
And drede of death doth her so moche wo,
That thrise doune she fill, in suche a were,
She riste her up, and stakereth here and there,
And on her handes fast looketh she,
" Alas, shall mine hands bloudie be,
I am a maide, and as by my nature,
And by my semblaunt, and by my vesture,
Mine hands been not shapen for a knife,
As for to reve no man fro his life,
What devill have I with the knife to do?
And shall I have my throte corve a two?

Than shall I blede alas, and be shende,
And nedes this thing mote have an ende,
Or he or I mote nedes lese our life,
Now certes" (quod she) "sens I am his wife,
And hath my faith, yet is bette for me
For to be dedde, in wifely honeste,
Than be a traitour living in my shame,
Be as be may, for earnest or for game,
He shall awake, and rise and go his way
Out at this gutter er that it be day :"
And wept full tenderly upon his face,
And in her armes gan him to embrace,
And him she joggeth, and awaketh soft,
And at the window lepe he fro the loft,
Whan she hath warned him, and done him bote :
This Lino swift was and light of foote,
And from her ran a full good paas.
This sely woman is so weake, alas
And helplesse, so that er she ferre went,
Her cruell father did her for to hent,
Alas Lino, why art thou so unkind,
Why ne hast thou remembred in thy mind,
And taken her, and led her forth with thee,
For whan she saw that gone away was hee,
And that she might not so fast go,
Ne folowen him, she sate doune right tho,
Untill she was caught, and fettred in prison
This tale is sayd for this conclusion.

HERE ENDETH THE LEGENDE OF GOOD WOMEN.



A GOODLY BALLADE OF CHAU CER.

MOTHER of norture, best beloved of all,
And freshe floure, to whom good thrift
God sende,
Your child if it luste you me so to call,
All be I unable my selfe so to pretende,
To your discrecion I recomende
Mine herte and al, with every circumstance,
All wholly to be under your governaunce.

Most desire I, and have and ever shal,
Thing, which might your hertes ease amend:
Have me excused, my power is but small,
Nathelesse of right ye ought to commend
My good will, which faine would entend
To do you service, for all my suffisaunce
Is holy to be under your governaunce.

Mieulx un, in herte, which never shall apall,
Aie freshe and new, and right glad to dispend
My time in your service, what so befall,
Beseeching your excellence to defend
My simplenesse, if ignorance offend
In any wise, sith that mine affiaunce,
Is holy to been under your governaunce.

Daisye of light, very ground of comfort,
The Sunnes doughter (ye hight) as I rede,
For whan he westreth, farwell your disport,
By your nature anone right for pure drede,
Of the rude night, that with his boistous wede
Of darkenesse, shadoweth our emispere,
Than closen ye, my lives ladie dere.

Dauning the day, to his kinde resort,
And Phebus your father, with his streames rede,
Adorneth the morrow, consuming the sort
Of mistie cloudes, that woulde overlede
True humble hertes, with hir mistyhede,
N'ere comfort a daies, whan eyen clere,
Disclose and sprede my lives ladie dere.

Je vouldray :—but great God disposeth
And maketh casuel by his providence,
Suche thing, as mans frele wit purposeth,
All for the best, if that your conscience
Not grutche it, but in humble pacience
It receive : for God saith without fable,
A faithful herte ever is acceptable.

Cautels who so useth gladly, gloseth,
To eschewe soch it is right high prudence,
What ye sayd ones, mine herte opposeth,
That my writing japes in your absence,
Pleased you moche better than my presence :
Yet can I more, ye be not excusable,
A faithfull herte ever is acceptable.

Quaketh my penne, my spirit supposeth,
That in my writing ye find woll some offence,
Min herte welkeneth thus sone, anon it riseth,

Now hotte, now colde, and este in fervence :
That misse is, is caused of negligence,
And not of malice, therefore beth merciable,
A faithfull herte ever is acceptable.

LENVOYE.

Forth complaint, forth lacking eloquence,
Forth little letter of enditing lame,
I have besought my ladies sapience,
Of thy behalfe, to accept in game,
Thine inabilitie, doe thou the same :
Abide have more yet :—Je serve Joyesse,
Now forth I close thee in holy Venus name,
Thee shall uncloze my hertes governeresse.



THE
BOOKE OF THE DUTCHESE,
OR THE DEATH OF BLANCH;
COMMONLY ENTITLED CHAUCER'S
DREAM.

I HAVE great wonder by this light,
How I live, for day ne night
I may not sleepe welnigh nought,
I have so many an idle thought,
Purely for default of sleepe,
That by my trouth I take no keepe
Of nothing, how it commeth or gothe,
To me n'is nothing lefe nor lothe,
All is yliche good to me,
Joy or sorrow, where so it be :
For I have feeling in nothing,
But as it were a mased thing,
All day in point to fall adoun,
For sorrowfull imaginaicoun
Is alway wholly in my minde.

And well ye wote, against kinde
It were to liven in this wise,
For nature would not suffise,
To none earthly creature,
Not long time to endure
Without sleepe, and be in sorrow :
And I ne may ne night ne morrow
Sleepe, and this melancolie
And drede I have for to die,

Defaut of sleepe and heavinesse
Hath slaine my spirit of quickenesse,
That I have lost all lustyhead,
Such fantasies ben in mine head,
So I n'ot what is best to do :
But men might aske me why so
I may not sleepe, and what me is.

But nathelesse, who aske this,
Leseth his asking truely,
My selven cannot tell why
The sooth, but truly as I gesse,
I hold it be a sickenesse
That I have suffred this eight yere,
And yet my boot is never the nere :
For there is phisicien but one,
That may me heale, but that is done :
Passe we over untill este,
That will not be, mote needs be lefte,
Our first matter is good to keepe.

So whan I saw I might not sleepe,
Now of late this other night
Upon my bed I sate upright,
And bade one reach me a booke,
A romaunce, and he it me tooke
To rede, and drive the night away :
For me thought it better play,
Than either at chesse or tables.

And in this booke were written fables,
That clerkes had in old time,
And other poets put in rime,
To rede, and for to be in mind,
While men loved the law of Kinde.
This booke ne spake but of such things,
Of queenens lives, and of kings,

And many other things smale.
Among all this I found a tale,
Thet me thought a wonder thing.

This was the tale : There was a king
That hight Seys, and had a wife,
The best that might beare life,
And this queene hight Alcione.
So it befell, thereafter soone
This king woll wenden over see :
To tellen shortly, whan that he
Was in the see, thus in this wise,
Such a tempest gan to rise,
That brake her mast, and made it fall,
And cleft her ship, and dreint hem all,
That never was found, as it tels,
Bord, ne man, ne nothing els.
Right thus this king Seys lost his life.

Now for to speake of Alcione his wife :
This lady that was left at home,
Hath wonder that the king ne come
Home, for it was a long terme :
Anon her herte began to yerne,
And for that her thought evermo
It was not wele, her thought so,
She longed so after the king,
That certes it were a pitous thing
To tell her heartely sorrowfull life,
That she had, this noble wife,
For him, alas ! she loved alderbest,
Anon she sent both east and west
To seeke him, but they found him nought.

“ Alas ” (quod she) “ that I was wrought,
Whether my lord my love be dead,
Certes I nill never eat bread,

I make a vow to my God here,
But I mowe of my lord here."

Such sorrow this lady to her tooke,
That truly I that made this booke,
Had such pitie and such routh
To rede her sorrow, that by my trouth
I farde the worse all the morrow
After, to thincken on her sorrow.

So whan this lady coud here no word,
That no man might find her lord,
Full oft she swowned, and said, "Alas,"
For sorrow full nigh wood she was,
Ne she coud no rede but one,
But downe on knees she sate anone,
And wept, that pitie were to here.

"A mercy sweet lady dere"
(Quod she) to Juno her goddesse,
"Helpe me out of this distresse,
And yeve me grace my lord to see
Soone, or wete where so he bee,
Or how he fareth, or in what wise,
And I shall make you sacrifice,
And holy yours become I shall,
With good will, body, herte, and all;
And but thou wolt this, lady swete,
Send me grace to slepe and mete
In my sleepe some certain sweven,
Where through that I may know even
Whether my lord be quicke or dead."

With that word she hing downe the head,
And fell in a swowne, as cold as stone;
Her women caught her up anone,
And brought her in bed all naked,
And she forweped and forwaked,

Was weary, and thus the dead sleepe
Fell on her, or she tooke keepe,
Through Juno, that had heard her boone,
That made her to sleepe soone,
For as she praide, right so was done
Indeed, for Juno right anone
Called thus her messengere
To do her errand, and he come nere,
Whan he was come, she bad him thus.

“Go bet” (quod Juno) “to Morpheus,
“Thou knowest him well the god of sleepe,
Now understand well, and take keepe,
Say thus on my halfe, that hee,
Go fast into the great see,
And bid him that on all thing
He take up Seys body the king,
That lieth full pale, and nothing rody,
Bid him creepe into the body,
And do it gone to Alcione
The queene, there she lieth alone,
And shew her shortly, it is no nay,
How it was dreint this other day,
And do the body speake right so,
Right as it was wonted to do,
The whiles that it was alive,
Go now fast, and hye thee blive.”

This messenger tooke leve and went
Upon his way, and never he stent
Till he came to the darke valley,
That stant betweene rockes twey,
There never yet grew corne ne gras,
Ne tree, ne naught that aught was,
Beast ne man, ne naught els,
Save that there were a few wels

Came renning fro the cliffes adowne,
 That made a deadly sleeping sowne,
 And rennen downe right by a cave,
 That was under a rocke ygrave,
 Amid the valley wonder deepe,
 There these goddes lay asleepe,
 Morpheus and Eclympasteire,
 That was the god of sleepes heire,
 That slept, and did none other werke.

This cave was also as derke
 As Hell pitte, over all about,
 They had good leyser for to rout,
 To vye who might sleepe best,
 Some hing hir chin upon hir brest,
 And slept upright hir head yhed,
 And some lay naked in hir bed,
 And slept whiles their daies last.

This messenger come renning fast,
 And cried "Ho, ho, awake anone,"
 It was for nought, there heard him none,
 "Awake" (quod he) "who lieth there,"
 And blew his horne right in hir ear,
 And cried "Awaketh wonder hye."

This god of sleepe, with his one eye
 Cast up, and asked "Who clepeth there,"
 "It am I" (quod this messengere)
 Juno bade thou shouldest gone,
 And told him what he should done,
 As I have told you here before,
 It is no need rehearse it more,
 And went his way whan he had saide:
 Anone this god of slepe abraide
 Out of his sleepe, and gan to go,
 And did as he had bidde him do,

Tooke up the dead body soone,
And bare it forth to Alcyone
His wife the queene, there as she lay,
Right even a quarter before day,
And stood right at her beds fete,
And called her right as she hete
By name and said: "My sweet wife
Awake, let be your sorrowfull life,
For in your sorrow there lyeth no rede,
For certes sweet love I am but dede,
Ye shall me never on live ysee.
But good sweet herte looke that yee
Bury my body, for such a tide
Ye mowe it find the see beside,
And farewell sweet, my worlds blisse,
I pray God your sorrow lisse,
Too little while our blisse lasteth."

With that her eyen up she casteth,
And saw naught: "Alas" (quod she) for sorrow,
And died within the third morrow.

But what she said more in that swowe,
I may not tell it you as now,
It were too long for to dwell,
My first mattere I will you tell,
Wherefore I have told you this thing,
Of Alcione, and Seis the king.

For thus much dare I say wele,
I had be dolven every dele,
And dead, right through default of sleepe,
If I ne had red, and take kepe
Of this tale next before,
And I will tell you wherefore,
For I ne might for bote ne bale
Sleepe, or I had redde this tale

Of this dreint Seis the king,
And of the gods of sleeping.

Whan I had red this tale wele,
And overlooked it everydele,
Me thought wonder if it were so,
For I had never heard speake or tho
Of no gods, that coud make
Men to sleepe, ne for to wake,
For I ne knew never God but one,
And in my game I said anone,
And yet me list right evill to pley,
Rather than that I should dey
Through default of sleeping thus,
I would give thilke Morpheus,
Or that goddesse dame Juno,
Or some wight els, I ne rought who,
To make me slepe, and have some rest,
I will give him the alther best
Yeft, that ever he abode his live,
And here onward, right now as blive,
If he woll make me sleepe alite,
Of downe of pure doves white,
I woll yeve him a featherbed,
Raied with gold, and right well cled,
In fine blacke sattin d'outremere,
And many a pillow, and every bere,
Of cloth of raines to slepe on soft,
Him there not need to turne oft,
And I woll yeve him all that fals
To his chamber and to his hals,
I woll do paint with pure gold,
And tapite hem full manyfold,
Of one sute this shall he have,
If I wist where were his cave,

If he can make me sleepe soone,
As did the goddesse, queene Alcyone,
And thus this ilke god Morpheus
May win of me mo fees thus
Than ever he wan : and to Juno,
That is his goddesse, I shall so do,
I trowe that she shall hold her paid.

I had unneth that word ysaïd,
Right thus as I have told you,
That suddainly I n'ist how,
Such a lust anone me tooke
To sleepe, that right upon my booke
I fell a sleepe, and therewith even
Me mette so inly such a sweven,
So wonderfull, that never yet
I trowe no man had the wit
To conne well my sweven rede.

No, not Joseph without drede,
Of Egypt, he that rad so,
The kinges meting Pharao,
No more than coud the least of us.

Ne nat scarcely Macrobeus,
He that wrote all the avision
That he mette of king Scipion,
The noble man the Affrican,
Such mervailles fortunèd than,
I trowe arede my dreames even,
Lo thus it was, this was my sweven.

Me thought thus, that it was May,
And in the dawning there I lay,
Me mette thus in my bed all naked,
And looked forth for I was waked,
With smale foules a great hepe,
That had afraied me out of my slepe,

Through noise and sweetnesse of hir song,
And as me mette, they sat among
Upon my chamber roofe without
Upon the tyles over all about.
And everiche song in his wise
The most solemne servise
By note, that ever man I trow
Had heard, for some of hem sung low,
Some high, and all of one accord,
To tell shortly at o word,
Was never heard so sweet steven,
But it had be a thing of Heven,
So merry a sowne, so sweet entunes,
That certes for the towne of Tewnes
I n'olde, but I had heard hem sing,
For all my chamber gan to ring,
Through singing of hir ermony,
For instrument nor melody
Was no where heard, yet halfe so swete,
Nor of accord halfe so mete,
For there was none of hem that fained
To sing, for ech of hem him pained
To find out many crafty notes,
They ne spared nat hir throtes,
And sooth to saine, my chamber was
Full well depainted, and with glas
Were all the windowes well yglased
Full clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to behold it was great joy,
For holy all the story of Troy
Was in the glaising ywrought thus,
Of Hector, and of king Priamus,
Of Achilles, and of king Laomedon,
And eke of Medea and Jason,

Of Paris, Heleine, and of Lavine,
And all the wals with colours fine
Were paint, both text and glose,
And all the Romaunt of the Rose,
My windowes weren shit echone,
And through the glasse the Sunne shone
Upon my bed with bright bemes,
With many glad glidy stremes,
And eke the welkin was so faire,
Blew, bright, clere was the aire,
And full attempre, for sooth it was,
For neyther too cold ne hote it n'as,
Ne in all the welkin was no cloud.

And as I lay thus wonder loud
Me thought I heard a hunte blow
T'assay his great horne, and for to know
Whether it was clere, or horse of sowne.

And I heard going both up and downe
Men, horse, hounds, and other thing,
And all men speake of hunting,
How they would slee the hart with strength,
And how the hart had upon length
So much enbosed, I n'ot now what.

Anon right whan I heard that,
How that they would on hunting gone,
I was right glad, and up anone
Tooke my horse, and forth I went
Out of my chamber, I never stent
Till I come to the field without,
There overtooke I a great rout
Of hunters and eke forresters,
And many relaies and limers,
And highed hem to the Forrest fast,
And I with hem, so at the last

I asked one lad, a lymere,
 “ Say, fellow, who shall hunte here”
 (Quod I) and he answered ayen,
 “ Sir, the emperour Octavien”
 (Quod he) “ and is here fast by.”

“ A goddes halfe, in good time” (quod I)
 Go we fast, and gan to ride,
 Whan we come to the forrest side,
 Every man did right soone,
 As to hunting fell to done.

The maister hunte, anone fote hote
 With his horne blew three mote
 At the uncoupling of his houndis,
 Within a while the hart found is
 Yhallowed, and rechased fast
 Long time, and so at the last
 This hart rouzed and stale away
 Fro all the hounds a previe way.

The hounds had overshot him all,
 And were upon a default yfall,
 Therewith the hunte wonder fast
 Blew a forloyn at the last,
 I was go walked fro my tree,
 And as I went, there came by me
 A whelpe, that fawned me as I stood,
 That had yfollowed, and coud no good,
 It came and crept to me as low,
 Right as it had me yknow,
 Held downe his head, and joyned his cares,
 And laid all smooth downe his heares.

I would have caught it anone,
 It fled, and was fro me gone,
 As I him followed, and it forth went
 Downe by a floury grene it went

Full thicke of grasse, full soft and sweet,
With floures fele, faire under feet,
And little used, it seemed thus,
For both Flora, and Zepherus,
They two, that make floures grow,
Had made hir dwelling there I trow,
For it was on to behold,
As though the earth envye wold
To be gayer than the heven,
To have mo floures such seven,
As in the welkin sterres be,
It had forget the poverte
That winter, through his cold morrowes
Had made it suffer, and his sorrowes
All was foryeten, and that was seene,
For all the wood was woxen greene,
Sweetnesse of dewe had made it waxe.

It is no need eke for to axe
Where there were many greene greves,
Or thicke of trees, so full of leues,
And every tree stood by himselve
Fro other, well tenne foot or twelve,
So great trees, so huge of strength,
Of fortie or fiftie fadome length,
Cleane without bowe or sticke,
With croppes brode, and eke as thicke,
They were not an inch asunder,
That it was shadde over all under,
And many an hart and many an hind
Was both before me and behind,
Of fawnes, sowers, buckes, does,
Was full the wood, and many roes,
And many squirrels, that sete
Full high upon the trees and ete,

And in hir manner made feasts :
Shortly, it was so full of beasts,
That though Argus the noble countour
Sate to reckon in his countour,
And reckon with his figures ten,
For by tho figures newe all ken,
If they be craftie, reckon and nombre,
And tell of every thing the nombre,
Yet should he faile to reckon even
The wonders me met in my sweven :
But forth I romed right wonder fast
Downe the wood, so at the last
I was ware of a man in blacke,
That sate, and had yturned his backe
To an oke, an huge tree :
“ Lord,” thought I, “ who may that bee,
What eyleth him to sitten here,”
Anon right I went nere,
Than found I sitte, even upright,
A wonder welfaring knight,
By the manner me thought so,
Of good mokel, and right yonge thereto,
Of the age of foure and twentie yeere,
Upon his beard but little heere,
And he was clothed all in blacke.
I stalked even unto his backe,
And there I stood as still as ought,
The sooth to say, he saw me nought,
For why he hing his head adowne,
And with a deadly sorrowfull sowne,
He made of rime ten verses or twelve,
Of a complaint to himselve,
The most pitie, the most routh
That ever I heard, for by my trouth

It was great wonder that nature
Might suffer any creature
To have such sorrow, and he not ded :
Full pitous pale, and nothing red,
He said a lay, a manner song,
Without note, without song,
And was this, for full well I can
Rehearse it, right thus it began.

“ I have of sorrow so great wone,
That joy get I never none,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with all my might,
Is fro me dead, and is agone,
And thus in sorrow left me alone,
Alas, Death, what eyleth thee,
That thou n’oldest have taken me
Whan that thou tooke my lady swete,
Of all goodnesse she had none mete,
That was so faire, so fresh, so free,
So good, that men may well see.”

Whan he had made thus his complaint,
His sorrowfull herte gan fast faint,
And his spirits wexen dead,
The blood was fled for pure dread
Down to his herte, to maken him warme,
For well it feeled the herte had harme,
To wete eke why it was adrad
By kinde and for to make it glad,
For it is member principall
Of the body, and that made all
His hew chaunge, and wexe greene
And pale, for there no blood is seene
In no manner limme of his.

Anon therewith, whan I saw this,

He fardle thus evill there he sete,
 I went and stood right at his fete,
 And grette him, but he spake nought,
 But argued with his owne thought,
 And in his wit disputed fast,
 Why, and how his life might last,
 Him thought his sorrowes were so smart,
 And lay so cold upon his herte.

So through his sorrow and holy thought,
 Made him that he heard me nought,
 For he had welnigh lost his minde,
 Though Pau, that men clepeth god of kinde,
 Were for his sorrowes never so wroth.

But at the last, to faine right sooth,
 He was ware of me, how I stood
 Before him and did off my hood,
 And had ygret him, as I best coud
 Debonairly, and nothing loud,
 He said, "I pray thee be not wroth,
 I heard thee not, to saine the sooth,
 Ne I saw the not, sir, truly,"

"Ah, good sir, no force" (quod I)
 "I am right sorry, if I have ought
 Distroubled you out of your thought,
 Foryeve me, if I have misse-take."

"Yes, thamends is light to make"
 ((Quod he)) "for there lithe none thereto,
 There is nothing mis-saide, nor do."

Lo how goodly spake this knight,
 As it had be another wight,
 And made it neyther tough ne queint,
 And I saw that, and gan me acquaint
 With him, and found him so trefable,
 Right wonder skilfull and reasonable,

As me thought, for all his bale,
Anon right I gan find a tale
To him, to looke where I might ought
Have more knowledging of his thought.

“ Sir” (quod I) “ this game is done,
I holde that this hart be gone,
These huntres can him no where see.”

“ I do no force thereof” (quod he)
“ My thought is thereon never adele,”
“ By our lord” (quod I) “ I trow you wele,
Right so me thinketh by your chere,
But, sir, o thing woll ye here,
Me thinketh in great sorrow I you see,
But certes, sir, if that ye
Would aught discovre me your wo,
I would, as wise God helpe me so,
Amend it, if I can or may,
Ye mowe prove it by assay,
For by my trouth, to make you hole,
I woll do all my power whole,
And telleth me of your sorrowes smart,
Paraunter it may ease your herte,
That semeth full sicke under your side.”

With that he looked on me aside,
As who saith nay, that n’ill not be.

“ Graunt mercy good friend” (quod he)
“ I thanke thee, that thou wouldest so,
But it may never the rather be do,
No man may my sorrow glade,
That maketh my hew to fall and fade,
And hath my understanding lorne,
That me is wo that I was borne,
May nought make my sorrowes slide,
Not all the remedies of Ovide,

Ne Orpheus god of melodie,
Ne Dedalus, with his playes slie,
Ne heale me may no phisicien,
Nought Ipocras, ne Galien,
Me is wo that I live houres twelve,
But who so woll assay hemselve,
Whether his herte can have pite
Of any sorrow let him see me,
I wretch that death hath made all naked
Of all the blisse that ever was maked,
Ywroth, werste of all wights,
That hate my dayes, and my nights,
My life, my lustes, be me loth,
For all fare and I be wroth,
The pure death is so full my fo,
That I would die, it will not so,
For whan I follow it, it will flie,
I would have him, it n'll not me,
This is pain without reed,
Alway dying, and be not deed,
That Tesiphus that lieth in Hell,
May not of more sorrow tell,
And who so wist all, by my trouth,
My sorrow, but he had routh
And pitie of my sorrows smart,
That man hath a fiendly herte :
For whoso seeth me first on morrow,
May saine he hath met with sorrow,
For I am sorrow, and sorrow is I,
Alas, and I will tell thee why,
My sorrow is tourned to plaining,
And all my laughter to weeping,
My glad thoughts to heavinesse,
In travaile is mine idlenesse,

And eke my rest, my wele is wo,
My good is harme, and evermo
In wrath is tourned my playing,
And my delite into sorrowing,
Mine heale is tourned into sicknesse,
In drede is all my sikernesse,
To derke is turned all my light,
My witte is folly, my day is night.
My love is hate, my slepe wakyng,
My mirth and meales is fastyng,
My countenaunce is nicete,
And all abawed, where so I be,
My peace pleding, and in werre
Alas, how might I fare werre.

“ My boldnesse is turned to shame,
For false Fortune hath played a game
At the chesse with me, alas the while,
The trayteresse false and full of gile,
That al behoteth, and nothing halte,
She gothe upright, and yet she halte,
That baggeth foule, and loketh fayre,
The dispitous debonaire,
That scorneth many a creature,
An ydole of false purtraiture
Is she, for she woll sone wryen,
She is the monstres heed ywryen,
As filth, over ystrowed with floures,
Her most worship and her floures
To lyen, for that is her nature,
Without faith, lawe, or mesure
She false is, and ever laughing
With one eye, and that other weping.
That is brought up, she set al downe:
I liken her to the scoriowne,

That is a false flattering beest,
For with his head he maketh feest,
But all amid his flatering,
With his taile he will sting
And envenim, and so will she :
She is the envious Charite,
That is aye false, and semeth wele,
So turneth she her false whele
About, for it is nothing stable,
Now by the fire, now at table,
Full many one hath she thus yblent,
She is play of enchauntment,
That seemeth one, and is not so
The false thefe, what hath she do,
Trowest thou, by our Lord, I will thee say,
At the chesse with me she gan to play,
With her false draughtes full divers
She stale on me, and toke my fers,
And whan I sawe my fers away,
Alas I couth no lenger play,
But said, farewell sweet ywis,
And farewell all that ever there is :
Therewith Fortune said, checke here,
And mate in the mid point of the checkere,
With a paune errant, alas,
Full craftier to play she was
Than Athalus, that made the game
First of the chesse, so was his name :
But God wolde I had ones or twise,
Yconde, and know the jeopardise,
That coude the Greke Pythagores,
I shulde have plaide the bet at ches,
And kept my fers the bet thereby,
And though whereto, for trewly

I holde that wishe not worthe a stre,
It had be never the bet for me,
For Fortune can so many a wyle,
There be but few can her begile,
And eke she is the lasse to blame,
My selfe I wolde have do the same,
Before God, had I been as she,
She ought the more excused be,
For this I say yet more thereto,
Had I be God, and might have do,
My will, whan she my fers caught,
I wold have drawe the same draught :
For also wise, God give me reste,
I dare well swere, she toke the best,
But through that draught I have lorne
My blisse, alas that I was borne,
For evermore I trowe trewly,
For all my will, my lust wholly
Is turned, but ye, what to done,
By our Lorde it is to die sone :
For nothing I leave it nought,
But live and die, right in this thought.
For there n'is planet in firmament,
Ne in ayre ne in erth none element,
That they ne yeve me a yeft echone,
Of weping whan I am alone :
For whan that I advise me wele,
And bethinke me everydele,
How that there lieth in rekening,
In my sorrow for nothing,
And how there liveth no gladnesse
May glad me of my distresse,
And how I have lost suffisaunce
And thereto I have no pleasaunce :

Than may I say, I have right nought,
 And whan al this falleth in my thought,
 Alas, than am I overcome,
 For that is done, is not to come
 I have more sorrow than Tantale."

And I herde him tell this tale
 Thus pitously, as I you tell
 Unneth might I lenger dwell:
 It did mine herte so much wo.

"A good sir" (quod I) "say nat so,
 Have some pitie on your nature,
 That fourmed you to creature,
 Remembreth you of Socrates,
 For he counted not three strees
 Of nought that Fortune coude do.

"No" (quod he) "I can not so,"
 "Why good sir, yes parde" (quod I)
 "Ne say not so for truely,
 Though ye had lost the feerses twelve
 And ye for sorrow murdred your selve,
 Ye should be dampned in this cas,
 By as good right as Medea was,
 That slough her children for Jason,
 And Phyllis also for Demophon
 Hing her selfe, so welaway
 For he had broke his terme day
 To come to her: another rage
 Had Dido, the quene eke of Cartage,
 That slough her selfe, for Eneas
 Was false, which a foole she was:
 And Ecquo died, for Narcissus
 N'olde nat love her, and right thus
 Hath many another folly done,
 And for Dalida died Sampson,

That slough himselfe with a pillere,
But there is no man alive here
Would for hir fers make this wo."

"Why so" (quod he) "it is not so,
Thou wotest full little what thou menest,
I have lost more than thou wenest:"

"How may that be" (quod I)

"Good sir, tell me all holy,
In what wise, how, why and wherefore,
That ye have thus your blisse lore?"

"Blithely" (quod he) "come sit down,
I tell thee upon a condition,
That thou shalt holy with all thy wit
Doe thine entent to hearken it."

"Yes sir:"—"Swere thy trouth thereto,
"Gladly do than hold here to,"

"I shall right blithely, so God me save,
Holy with all the wit I have,
Here you as well as I can:"

"A goddes halfe" (quod he) and began.

"Sir" (quod he) sith first I couth
Have any manner wit fro youth,
Or kindly understanding,
To comprehend in any thing
What Love was, in mine owne wit,
Dredelesse I have ever yet
Be tributarie, and yeve rent
To Love holy, with good entent.
And through pleasaunce become his thrall,
With good will, body, herte, and all,
All this I put in his servage,
As to my lord, and did homage,
And full devoutly I praide him tho,
He should beset mine herte so,

That it pleasaunce to him were,
And worship to my lady dere.

“ And this was long, and many a yere
(Ere that mine herte was set o where)
That I did thus, and n’ist why,
I trowe it came me kindely,
Paraunter I was thereto most able,
As a white wall, or a table,
For it is ready to catch and take
All that men will therein make,
Whether so men will portrey or paint,
By the werkes never so queint.

“ And thilke time I fared right so,
I was able to have learned tho,
And to have conde as well or better
Paraunter either art or letter,
But for love came first in my thought,
Therefore I forgate it naught,
I chees love to my first craft,
Therefore it is with me laft,
For why, I tooke it of so yong age,
That malice had my courage
Not that time turned to nothing,
Through too mokell knowledging,
For that time youth my maistresse
Governed me in idlenesse,
For it was in my first youth,
And tho full little good I couth,
For all my werkes were flitting
That time, and all my thought varying,
All were to me yliche good,
That knew I tho, but thus it stood.

“ It happed that I came on a day
Into a place, there that I sey

Truly the fairest companie
Of ladies, that ever man with eie
Had seene together in o place,
Shall I clepe it hap, either grace,
That brought me there, not but Fortune,
That is to lien full commune,
The false tratieresse perverse,
God would I could clepe her werse,
For now she worcheth me full wo,
And I woll tell soone why so.

“ Amonge these ladies thus echone,
Sooth to saine, I saw one
That was like none of the rout,
For I dare swere, without dout,
That as the summers Sunne bright
Is fairer, clerer, and hath more light
Than any other planet in Heven,
The Moone, or the sterres seven,
For all the world so had she
Surmounten hem all of beaute,
Of maner, and of comlinesse,
Of stature, and of well set gladnesse,
Of goodly heed, and so wel besey,
Shortly what shall I more sey,
By God and by his halowes twelve,
It was my swete, right all her selve,
She had so stedfast countenaunce,
So noble porte, and maintenaunce:
And Love, that well harde my bone,
Had espied me thus sone,
That she full soone in my thought,
As helpe me God so was I cought
So sodainly, that I ne toke
No maner counsaile, but at her loke,

And at mine herte, for why her eyen
So gladly I trowe mine herte seyne,
That purely tho, mine owne thought,
Said, it were better serve her for nought,
Than with another to be wele,
And it was soth, for every dele,
I will anone right tell thee why.

“ I sawe her daunce so comely,
Carol and sing so swetely,
Laugh, and play so womanly,
And looke so debonairly,
So goodly speke and so freendly :
That certes I trowe that evermore,
Nas sene so blisfull a tresore :
For every heer on her heed,
Sothe to say it was not reed,
Ne neither yelowne ne browne it nas,
Me thought most like gold it was,
And which eyen my lady had,
Debonaire, good, glad, and sad,
Simple, of good mokel, not to wide,
Thereto her loke nas not aside,
Ne overtwhart, but beset so wele,
It drewe and tooke up everydele
All that on her gan behold,
Her eyen semed anone she wold
Have mercy, folly wenden so,
But it was never the rather do,
It nas no counterfeted thing,
It was her owne pure loking :
That the goddesse dame Nature,
Had made hem open by measure,
And close, for were she never so glad,
Her looking was not folish sprad,

Ne wildely, though that she plaid,
But ever me thought her eyen said,
By God my wrath is al foryeve.
Therewith her list so well to live,
That dulnesse was of her adrad,
She n'as to sobre ne to glad,
In all things more measure,
Had never I trowe creature,
But many one with her loke she herte,
And that sate her full litel at herte :
For she knew nothing of hir thought,
But whether she knew, or knew it nought,
Algate she ne rought of hem a stree,
To get her love no nere n'as he
That woned at home, than he in Inde,
The formest was alway behinde,
But good folke over all other,
She loved as man may his brother,
Of which love she was wonder large,
In skilfull places that bere charge,
But which a visage had she thereto,
Alas my herte is wonder wo,
That I ne can discriven it,
Me lacketh both English and wit.
For to undo it at the full,
And eke my spirites bene so dull
So great a thing for to devise,
I have not wit that can suffise
To comprehend her beaute,
But thus much I dare sain, that she
Was white, rody, fresh, and lively hewed,
And every day her beaute newed,
And nigh her face was alderbest,
For certes Nature had soch lest,

To make that faire, that truly she
 Was her chiefe patron of beaute,
 And chiefe ensample of all her werke
 And monster: for be it never so derke,
 Me thinketh I see her ever mo,
 And yet more over, though all tho
 That ever lived, were now a live,
 Ne would have found to discribe
 In all her face a wicked signe,
 For it was sad, simple, and benigne.

“ And soch a goodly swete speech,
 Had that swete, my lives leech,
 So frendely, and so well ygrounded
 Upon all reason, so well yfounded,
 And so trefable to all good,
 That I dare swere well by the rood,
 Of eloquence was never fonde
 So swete a souning faconde,
 Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse,
 Ne bet coude heale, that by the masse,
 I durst sweare though the pope it songe,
 That there was never yet through her tonge,
 Man ne woman greatly harmid,
 As for her, was all harme hid:
 Ne lasse flattering in her worde,
 That purely her simple recorde,
 Was found as trewe as any bond,
 Or trouth of any mans hond.

“ Ne chide she could never a dele,
 That knoweth all the world ful wele.
 But such a fairenesse of a necke,
 Had that swete, that bone nor brecke
 Nas there none seen, that mis-satte,
 It was white, smoth, streight, and pure flatte.

Without hole or canel bone,
And by seming, she had none.

“ Her throte, as I have now memoire,
Semed as a round toure of yvoire,
Of good greatnesse, and not to grete,
And faire white she hete,
That was my ladies name right,
She was thereto faire and bright,
She had not her name wrong,
Right faire shoulders, and body long
She had, and armes ever lith
Fattish, fleshy, nat great therewith,
Right white hands, and nailes rede,
Round brestes, and of good brede
Her Lippes were, a streight flatte backe,
I knew on her none other lacke,
That all her limmes n'ere pure sewing,
In as ferre as I had knowing,
Thereto she could so well play
What that her list, that I dare say
That was like to torch bright,
That every man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath never the lesse
Of maner and of comelinesse.

“ Right so farde my lady dere,
For every wight of her manere
Mought catche ynough, if that he wold
If he had eyen her to behold,
For I dare sweare well, if that she
Had among tenne thousand be,
She wolde have be at the beste,
A chefe myrrour of all the feste,
Though they had stonde in a rowe,
To mens eyen, that could have knowe,

For where so men had plaide or waked,
Me thought the felowship as naked
Without her, that I saw ones,
As a crowne without stones,
Trewly she was to mine eye,
The solein fenix of Arabie,
For there liveth never but one,
Ne such as she, ne know I none :
To speake of goodnesse, trewly she
Hadas moch debonairte,
As ever had Hester in the Bible,
And more, if more were possible,
And soth to sayne, therewithall
She had a witte so generall,
So whole enclined to all good,
That al her witte was sette by the rood,
Without malice, upon gladnesse,
And thereto I sawe never yet a lesse
Harmefull, than she was in doying,
I say not that she ne had knowyng
What harme was, or els she
Had coulede no good, so thinketh me,
And trewly, for to speake of trouth,
But she had had, it had be routh
Thereof she had so moch her dele,
And I dare saine, and swere it wele,
That Trough himselfe, over al and al,
Had chose his maner principall
In her, that was his resting place,
Thereto she had the most grace,
To have stedfast perseveraunce,
And easy attempre governaunce,
That ever I knew, or wist yet,
So pure suffraunt was her wit,

And reason gladly she understood,
It folowed wel, she coulde good,
She used gladly to do wele,
These were her maners every dele.

“ Therewith she loved so wel right,
She wrong do would to no wight,
No wight might do her no shame,
She loved so wel her own name.

“ Her lust to hold no wight in hond,
Ne be thou siker, she wold not fond,
To holde no wight in balaunce,
By halfe word ne by countenaunce,
But if men wold upon her lye,
Ne sende men into Walakie,
To Pruisse, and to Tartarie,
To Alisaundrie, ne into Turkie,
And bidde him fast, anone that he
Go hoodlesse into the drie see,
And come home by the Carrenare.

“ And sir, be now right ware,
That I may of you here saine,
Worship, or that ye come againe.

“ She ne used no soch knackes smale,
But therfore that I tell my tale,
Right on this same I have said,
Was wholly all my love laid,
For certes she was that swete wife,
My suffisaunce, my lust, my life,
Mine hope, mine heale, and all blesse,
My worlds welfare, and my goddesse,
And I wholly hers, and every dele.”

“ By our Lorde” (quod I) “ I trowe you
Hardly, your love was wel beset, [wele,
I n’ot how it might have do bet.”

“ Bet, ne not so wel” (quod he)

“ I trowe sir” (quod I) “ parde.”

“ Nay leve it wel :”—“ Sir so do I,
I leve you wel, that trewly
You thought that she was the best,
And to behold, the alderfairest,
Who so had loked her with your eyen ?”

“ With mine, nay all that her seyen,
Said and swore it was so,
And though they ne had, I would tho
Have loved best my lady free,
Though I had had al the beaute
That ever had Alcibiades,
And al the strength of Hercules,
And thereto had the worthinesse
Of Alisaunder, and all the richesse
That ever was in Babiloine,
In Cartage, or in Macedoine,
Or in Rome, or in Ninive,
And thereto also hardy be,
As was Hector, so have I joy,
That Achilles slough at Troy,
And therefore was he slayne also
In a temple, for both two
Were slaine, he and Antilegius,
And so saith Dares Frigius,
For love of Polixena,
Or ben as wise as Minerva,
I would ever, without drede
Have loved her, for I must nede.

“ Nede ? Nay trewly I gabbe now,
Nought nede, and I woll tellen how,
For of good will mine herte it wold.
And eke to love her, I was holde,

As for the fayrest and the best,
She was as good, so have I rest,
As ever was Penelope of Greece,
Or as the noble wife Lucrece,
That was the best, he telleth thus
The Romaine Titus Livius,
She was as good, and nothing like,
Though hir stories be autentike,
Algate she was as trewe as she.

“ But wherefore that I tell thee,
Whan I first my lady sey,
I was right yong, soth to sey,
And full great need I had to lerne,
Whan mine herte wolde yerne,
To love it was a great emprise,
But as my wit wolde best suffise,
After my yong childely wit,
Without drede I beset it,
To love her in my best wise
To do her worship, and the servise
That I coude tho, by my trouth
Without faining, eyther slouth,
For wonder faine I wolde her see,
So mokell it amended mee,
That whan I sawe her amorowe,
I was warished of all my sorowe
Of all day after, till it were eve,
Me thought nothing might me greve,
Were my sorowes never so smert,
And yet she set so in mine herte,
That by my trouth, I n’old nought
For all this world, out of my thought
Leave my lady, no trewly.”

“ Now by my trouth sir” (quod I)

“ Me thinketh ye have such a chaunce,
As shrift, without repentaunce.”

“ Repentaunce, nay fie” (quod he)

“ Shuld I now repent me
To love, nay certes than were I well
Worse than was Achitofell,
Or Antenor, so have I joy,
The traitour that betrayed Troy :
Or the false Ganellion,
He that purchased the trayson
Of Rouland, and of Oliver :
Nay, while I am alive here,
I n’il foryet her never mo.”

“ Now good sir,” (quod I tho)
Ye have well told me here before,
It is no need to reherse it more,
How ye saw her first, and where,
But would ye tell me the manere,
To her which was your first speche,
Thereof I would you beseche,
And how she knew first your thought,
Whether ye loved her or nought,
And telleth me eke, what ye have lore,
I herde you tell here before,
Ye said, thou n’otest what thou meanest,
I have lost more than thou weenest :
What losse is that” (quod I tho)
“ N’il she not love you, is it so ?
Or have ye ought done amis,
That she hath lefte you, is it this ?
For Goddes love tell me all.”

“ Before God” (quod he) “ and I shall,
I say right as I have said,
On her was all my love laid,

And yet she n'ist it not never a dele,
Not longe time, leve it wele,
For by right siker, I durst nought
For all this world tell her my thought,
Ne I wolde have wrothed her trewly,
For wost thou why, she was lady
Of the body that had the herte.
And whoso hath that may not asterte.

“ But for to keepe me fro ydlenesse,
Trewly I did my businesse
To make songes, as I best coude.
And oft time I song hem loude,
And made songes, this a great dele,
Although I coude nat make so wele
Songes, ne knew the arte al,
As coude Lamekes son, Tubal,
That found out first the arte of songe,
For as his brothers hammers ronge,
Upon his anvelt up and downe,
Thereof he toke the first sowne.

“ But Grekes saine of Pithagoras;
That he the first finder was
Of the art, Aurora telleth so,
But thereof no force of hem two,
Algates songes thus I made,
Of my feling, mine herte to glade:
And lo this was alther first,
I n'ot where it were the werst.

“ Lord it maketh mine herte light,
Whan I thinke on that swete wight,
That is so semely one to se,
And wish to God it might so be
That she wold hold me for her knight,
My lady that is so fayre and bright.

“ Now have I told thee, soth to say,
My first song: upon a day,
I bethought me what wo
And sorowe that I suffred tho,
For her, and yet she wist it nought,
Ne tell her durst I not my thought:
Alas thought I, I can no rede,
And but I tell her, I am but dede,
And if I tel her, to say right soth
I am adradde she woll be wroth,
Alas, what shall I than do.
In this debate I was so wo,
Me thought mine herte brast atwain,
So at the last, sothe for to saine,
I bethought me that Nature,
Ne formed never in creature,
So much beauty trewly
And bounty, without mercy.

“ In hope of that, my tale I tolde,
With sorowe, as that I never sholde,
For nedes, and maugre mine heed
I must have tolde her, or be deed:
I n’ot well how that I began,
Full yvell reherce it I can,
And eke as helpe me God withall,
I trow it was in the dismall,
That was the ten woundes of Egipt,
For many a word I overskipt
In my tale for pure fere,
Lest my wordes mis-set were,
With sorowfull herte, and woundes dede,
Soft and quaking for pure drede,
And shame, and stinting in my tale,
For ferde, and mine hew al pale,

Full oft I wexte both pale and red,
Bowing to her I hing the hed,
I durst not ones loke her on,
For wit, manner and all was gone,
I said : Mercy, and no more,
It n'as no game, it sate me sore.

“ So at the last soth to saine,
Whan that mine herte was com againe,
To tell shortly all my speech,
With hole herte I gan her beseech
That she wolde be my lady swete,
And swore, and hertely gan her hete,
Ever to be stedfast and trewe,
And love her alway freshly newe,
And never other lady have,
And all her worship for to save,
As I best coude, I sware her this,
For yours is all that ever there is,
For evermore, mine herte swete,
And never to false you, but I mete
I n'il, as wise God helpe me so.

“ And whan I had my tale ydo,
God wote she acompted not a stre
Of all my tale, so thought me,
To tell shortly right as it is
Trewly her answeere it was this,
I can not now well countrefete
Her wordes, but this was the grete
Of her answeere, she said nay
All utterly : alas that day,
The sorow I suffered and the wo,
That trewly Cassandra that so
Bewayled the destruction
Of Troy, and of Illion,

Had never such sorow as I tho,
I durst no more say thereto,
For pure feare, but stale away,
And thus I lived full many a day,
That trewly I had no need,
Ferther than my beddes heed,
Never a day to seche sorrow,
I found it ready every morrow,
For why I loved in no gere.

“ So it befell another yere,
I thought ones I would fonde,
To doe her know, and understonde
My wo, and she well understood,
That I ne wilned thing but good,
And worship, and to keepe her name,
Over all things, and drede her shame,
And was so busie her to serve,
And pitie were that I should sterve,
Sith that I wilned no harme ywis.

“ So whan my lady knew all this,
My lady yave me all holy,
The noble yeft of her mercy,
Saving her worship by all ways,
Dredelesse, I mene none other ways,
And therewith she yave me a ring,
I trowe it was the first thing,
But if mine herte was ywaxe
Glad that it is no need to axe.

“ As helpe me God, I was as blive
Raised, as fro death to live,
Of all happes the alderbest,
The gladdest and the most at rest,
For truely that swete wight,
Whan I had wrong, and she the right,

She would alway so goodly
Foryeve me so debonairly,
In all my youth, in all chaunce,
She tooke in her governaunce,
Therewith she was alway so true,
Our joy was ever yliche newe,
Our hertes were so even a paire,
That never n'as that one contrarie
To that other, for no wo
For soth yliche they suffred tho.
O blisse, and eke o sorow bothe,
Yliche they were both glad and wrothe,
All was us one, without were,
And thus we lived full many a yere,
So well, I can not tell how."

"Sir" (quod I) "where is she now?"
"Now" (quod he) and stinte anone,
Therewith he woxe as dedde as stone,
And saied, "Alas, that I was bore,
That was the losse, that herebefore
I tolde thee that I had lorne,
"Bethinke thee how I said here beforne,
Thou woste full litle what thou menest,
I have loste more than thou wenest.

"God wote alas, right that was she."
"Alas sir how, what may that be?"
"She is dedde:"—"Nay."—"Yes by my
trouth,"

"Is that your losse, by God it is routhe."

And with that worde right anone,
They gan to strake forth, all was done
For that time, the hart huntynge.

With that me thought that this kyng,
Gan homeward for to ride,

Unto a place was there beside,
Which was from us but a lite,
A long castell with walles white,
By saint Johan, on a rich hill,
As me mette, but thus it fill.

Right thus me mette, as I you tell,
That in the castell there was a bell,
As it had smitte houres twelve,
Therewith I awoke my selve,
And found me lying in my bedde,
And the booke that I had redde,
Of Alcione and Seis the kyng,
And of the goddes of sleping,
Yfound it in mine hond full even,
Thought I, this is so queint a sweven,
That I would by processe of tyme,
Fonde to put this sweven in ryme,
As I can best, and that anon,
This was my sweven, now it is done.

EXPLICIT.

My master, Bukton, whan of Christ our king,
Was asked, what is troth or sothfastnesse,
He not a worde answerde to that asking,
As who saith, no man is all true, I gesse :
And therefore, though I hight to expresse
The sorrow and wo that is in mariage,
I dare not writen of it no wickednesse,
Lest I my selfe fall ofte in suche dotage.
I woll not say how that it is the chaine
Of Sathanas, on which he knaweth ever,

But I dare saine were he out of his paine,
As by his will he would be bounden never,
But thilke doted foole, that eft hath lever
Ychayned be, than out of prison crepe,
God let him never fro his wo discever,
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe.

But yet lest thou doe worse, take a wife,
Bet is to wedde, than brenne in worse wise.
But thou shalt have sorow on thy flesh thy life,
And ben thy wives thrale, as sain these wise,
And if that holy writ may not suffice,
Experience shall thee teach, so may happe,
Take the way lever to be taken in frise,
Than este to fall of wedding in the trappe.

This little writte, proverbes or figures,
I sende you, take keepe of it I rede,
Unwise is he, that can no wele endure,
If thou be siker, put thee not in drede,
The Wife of Bathe, I pray you that ye rede
Of this matter that we have on honde,
God graunt you your lyfe freely to lede
In fredome, for foule is to be bonde.

EXPLICIT.



THE
ASSEMBLY OF FOULES.

THE lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Th' assay so hard, so sharpe the conquering,
The dreadful joy, alway that flit so yerne,
All this mean I by Love, that my feeling
Astonieth with his wonderful werkyng,
So sore ywis, that whan I on him think,
Naught wete I wel, whether I flete or sink.

For all be that I know not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folke hir hire,
Yet happeth me full oft in bookes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruell ire,
There rede I well, he woll be lorde and sire.
I dare not say his strokes be sore,
But God save suche a lorde, I can no more.

Of usage, what for lust and what for lore,
On bookes rede I of, as I you told,
But wherfore speake I all this? naught yore
Agon, it happed me to behold
Upon a booke was ywritten with letters old,
And thereupon a certain thing to lerne,
The long day, full fast I radde and yerne.

For out of the old fieldes, as men saithe,
Cometh al this new corne fro yere to yere,
And out of old bookes, in good faithe,
Cometh all this new science that men lere,
But now to purpose, as of this mattere,
To rede forth it gan me so delite,
That all that day, me thought it but a lite.

This booke of which I make mencion,
Entitled was right thus, as I shall tell,
Tullius, of the dreame of Scipion :
Chapiters seven it had, of Heaven and Hell,
And earth, and soules that therein dwell,
Of which as shortly as I can it treate,
Of his sentence I woll you saine the greate.

First telleth it, whan Scipion was come
In Affricke, how he meteth Massinisse,
That him for joy, in armes hath ynome,
Than telleth he hir speach and all the blisse,
That was betwixt hem til the day gan misse,
And how his auncester Affrikan so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night til him appere.

Than telleth it, that from a sterrie place,
How Affrikan hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of all his grace,
And said him, what man lered eyther lowde,
That loveth common profite well ithewde,
He should into a blisfull place wend,
There as the joy is without any end.

Than asked he, if folke that here been dede
Have life, and dwelling in another place ?

And Affrikan said Ye, without any drede,

And how our present lives space,
Ment but a maner death, what way we trace,
And rightfull folke, shall gon after they die
To Heaven, and shewed him the Galaxie.

Than shewed he him, the little earth that here is
To regard of the Heavens quantite,
And after shewed he hym the nine speris,
And after that the melodie heard he,
That commeth of thilke speres thrise three,
That welles of musicke been and melodie
In this world here, and cause of armonie.

Than said he him, sens Earth was so lite,
And full of tourment, and of harde grace,
That he ne should him in this world delite :
Than told he him, in certain yeres space,
That every sterre should come into his place,
There it was first, and all should out of mind,
That in this world is done of all mankind.

Than prayed him Scipion, to tell him all
The way to come into that Heaven blisse,
And he said : “ First know thy selfe immortall,
And loke nie besely, that thou werche and wisse,
To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
To come swifly unto that place dere,
That full of blisse is, and of soules clere.

“ And breakers of the law, soth to saine,
And likerous folke, after that they been dede,
Shall whirle about the world, alway in paine
Till many a world be passed out of drede,
And than foryeven all hir wicked dede,
Than shullen they come to that blisfull place,
To which to comen, God send thee grace.”

The day gan failen, and the darke night,
That reveth beastes from hir businesse,
Beraft me my booke for lacke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfilled of thought and besie heavinesse,
For both I had thyng, which that I n'old,
And eke I ne had that thing that I wold.

But finally my spirite at last,
Forweary of my labour all that day,
Tooke rest, that made me to slepe fast,
And in my sleepe I mette, as that I say,
How Affrikan, right in the selfe aray
That Scipion him saw, before that tide,
Was come, and stode right at my beds side.

The wearie hunter sleeping in his bedde,
The wood ayen his mind goeth anone,
The judge dremeth, how his plees be spedde,
The carter dremeth, how his cartes gone,
The rich of gold, the knight fights with his fone,
The sicke mette he drinketh of the tonne,
The lover mette he hath his lady wonne.

Can I not saine, if that the cause were,
For I had radde of Affrikan beforne,
That made me to mete that he stood there,
But thus said he: "Thou hast thee so wel borne
In looking of mine old booke all to torne,
Of which Macrobie raught not a lite,
That some dele of thy labour would I quite."

Citherea, thou blisful lady swete,
That with thy fire brond, daunttest whan thee lest
That madest me this sweven for to mete,

Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best,
As wisely as I seigh the north northwest,
Whan I began my sweven for to write,
So yeve me might to rime it and endite.

This foresaid Affrikan me hent anone,
And forthwith him to a gate brought,
Right of a parke, walled with grene stone,
And over the gate, with letters large ywrought,
There were verse ywritten as me thought
On either halfe, of full great difference,
Of which I shall you say the playne sentence :

“ Through me men gon into the blisful place
Of hertes heale and dedly woundes cure,
Through me men gon into the well of grace,
There grene and lusty May shall ever endure,
This is the way to all good aventure,
Be glad thou reader, and thy sorow off cast,
All open am I, passe in and spede thee fast.”

“ Through me men gon” (than spake the other
Unto the mortall strokes of the speare, [side]
Of which disdaine and danger is the gide,
There never tree shall fruit ne leaves beare,
This streame you ledeth to the sorowful were,
There as the fish in pryson is all dry,
The eschewing is onely the remedy.”

These verses of gold and asure ywritten weare,
Of which I gan astonied to behold,
For with that one encreased all my feare,
And with that other gan my herte to bolde,
That one me hette, that other did me colde,
No wit had I for errour for to chese,
To enter or flie, or me to save or lese.

Right as betwene adamants two,
Of even weight, a peece of yron set
Ne hath no might to move ne to ne fro,
For what that one may hale that other let,
So fared I, that I n'ist where me was bet
To entre or leave, till Affrikan my gide,
Me hent and shove in at the gates wide.

And said, " It standeth written in thy face,
Thine errour, though thou tell it not me,
But dread thee not to come into this place,
For this writing is nothing meant by thee,
Ne by none, but he Love's servaunt bee,
For thou of love hast lost thy tast I gesse,
As sicke man hath, of swete and bitternesse.

" But natheles, although thou be dull,
That thou canst not doe, yet mayst thou see,
For many a man that may not stand a pull,
Yet liketh it him at the wrestlyng for to be,
And demeth yet, whether he doe bet, or he,
And if thou haddest connyng for t'endite,
I shall thee shew matter of to write."

And with that my hand in his he toke anon,
Of which I comfort caught, and went in fast,
But Lord so I was glad, and well begon,
For over all, where I mine eyen cast,
Were trees clad with leaves, that aie shal last
Eche in his kind, with colour fresh and grene,
As emeraude, that joy it was to sene.

The bilder oke, and eke the hardy asshe,
The piller elme, the coffre unto caraine,
The boxe pipe tree, holme to whippes lasshe,

The sailing firre, the cipres death to plaine,
 The shooter ewe, the aspe for shaftes plaine,
 The olive of peace, and eke the dronken vine,
 The victor palme, the laurer too divine.

A gardein saw I, full of blosomed bowis,
 Upon a river, in a grene mede,
 There as sweetnesse evermore inough is,
 With floures white, blewe, yelow, and rede,
 And cold welle streames, nothing dede,
 That swommen full of smale fishes light,
 With finnes rede, and scales silver bright.

On every bough the birdes heard I sing,
 With voice of angell, in hir armonie,
 That busied hem, hir birdes forth to bring,
 The little pretty conies to hir play gan hie,
 And further all about I gan espie,
 The dredeful roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
 Squirrels, and beastes small, of gentle kind.

Of instruments of stringes in accorde,
 Heard I so play, a ravishing swetnesse,
 That God, that maker is of all and Lorde,
 Ne heard never better, as I gesse,
 Therewith a wind, unneth it might be lesse,
 Made in the leaves grene a noise soft,
 Accordant to the foules song on loft.

The aire of the place so attempre was,
 That never was ther grevance of hot ne cold
 There was eke every holsome spice and gras,
 Ne no man may there waxe sicke ne old,
 Yet was there more joy o thousand fold,
 Than I can tell or ever could or might,
 There is ever clere day, and never night.

Under a tree, beside a well I sey
Cupide our lorde, his arrowes forge and file,
And at his feete his bowe already lay,
And well his doughter tempred all the while
The heddes in the well, with her wile
She couched hem after, as they should serve
Some to slee, and some to wound and carve.

Tho was I ware of Pleasaunce anon right,
And of Array, Lust, Beauty, and Curtesie,
And of the Craft, that can and hath the might
To don by force, a wight to don folie:
Disfigured was she, I will not lie,
And by himselfe, under an oke I gesse,
Sawe I Delite, that stood with Gentlenesse.

Than saw I Beauty, with a nice attire,
And Youth, full of game and jolitee,
Foole-hardinesse, Flatterie, and Desire,
Messagerie, Mede, and other three,
Hir names shall not here be told for me,
And upon pillars great of jasper long,
I sawe a temple of brasse yfounded strong.

And about the temple daunced alway
Women inow, of which some there were
Faire of hemself, and some of hem were gay,
In kirtils all disheveled went they there,
That was their office ever, fro yere to yere,
And on the temple, saw I white and faire,
Of doves sitting many a thousand paire.

And before the temple doore full soberly,
Dame Peace sat, a curtaine in her honde,
And her beside wonder discretly,

Dame Pacience, sitting there I fonde,
With face pale, upon an hill of sonde,
And alther next, within and without,
Behest and Arte, and of her folke a rout.

Within the temple, of sighes hote as fire,
I heard a swough, that gan about ren,
Which sighes were engendred with desire,
That made every herte for to bren
Of newe flambe, and well espied I then,
That all the cause of sorowes, that they drie,
Come of the bitter goddess Jalousie.

The god Priapus, saw I as I went
Within the temple, in soverain place stond,
In such array, as whan the asse him shent
With eric by night, and with sceptre in honde,
Full busilie men gan assay and fonde,
Upon his hedde to set of sondrie hewe,
Garlandes full of freshe floures newe.

And in a privie corner, in disport
Found I Venus, and her porter Richesse,
That was full noble, and hautein of her port,
Darke was that place, but after lightnesse
I sawe a lite, unmethes, it might be lesse,
And on a bed of golde she lay to rest,
Till that the hote Sonne gan to west.

Her gilte heeres, with a gold threde
Ybound were, untressed as she lay,
And naked from the brest unto the hede,
Men might her see, and sothly for to saie,
The remnaunt, covered well to my paie,
Right with a little kerchefe of Valence,
There was no thicker clothe of defence.

The place gave a thousand savours soote,
And Bacchus god of wine sate her beside,
And Ceres next, that doeth of hunger boote,
And as I said, amiddes lay Cupide,
To whom on knees, the yonge folkes cride,
To be their helpe, but thus I let her lie,
And farther in the temple I gan espie.

That in dispite of Diane the chaste,
Full many a bowe ybroke hing on the wall,
Of maidens, such as gone hir times waste
In her service : and painted over all,
Of many a storie, of which I touch shall
A fewe, as of Calixte, and Athalant,
And many a maid, of which the name I want.

Semyramus, Candace, and Hercules,
Biblis, Dido, Tisbe, and Pirus,
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Helaine, Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Sylla, and eke the mother of Romulus,
All these were paynted on that other side,
And all hir love, and in what plite they dide.

Whan I was comen ayen into the place
That I of spake, that was so soote and grene,
Forth walked I tho, my selven to solace,
Tho was I ware, where there sate a queene,
That as of light, the sommer Sunne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure,
She fairer was than any creature.

And in a launde, upon an hill of floures,
Was set this noble goddess Nature,
Of branches were her halles and her boures

Ywrought, after her craft and her mesure,
Ne there n'as foul, that cometh of engendrure,
That there ne were prest, in her presence,
To take hir dome, and yeve hir audience.

For this was on saint Valentines day,
Whan every foule cometh to chese hir make,
Of every kind, that men thinke may,
And that so huge a noise gan they make,
That earth, sea, and tree, and every lake,
So full was, that unneth there was space
For me to stand, so full was all the place.

And right as Alain, in the Plaint of Kinde,
Deviseth Nature, of such araie and face,
In suche aray, men might her there finde.
This noble empresse full of all grace,
Bad every foule take hir owne place,
As they were wont alway, fro yere to yere,
On saint Valentines day, standen there.

That is to say, the foules of ravine
Were highest set, and than the foules smale,
That eaten, as that nature would encline,
As worme or thing, of which I tell no tale,
But water foule sat lowest in the dale,
And foules that liveth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so many, that wonder was to sene.

There might men the royall egle find,
That with his sharpe looke perseth the Son,
And other egles of a lower kind,
Of which that clerkes well devisen con,
There was the tyrant with his fethers don,
And grene, I mean the goshauke that doth pine
To birdes, for his outragious ravine.

The gentle faucon, that with his fete distreineth
The kings hand, the hardy sperhauke eke,
The quailes foe, the merlion that peineth
Himself full oft the larke for to seke,
There was the dove, with her eyen meke,
The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth,
The oul eke, that of deth the bode bringeth.

The crane, the geaunt, with his trompes sounce,
The thief the chough, and the chattring pie,
The scorning jaye, the eles foe the heroune,
The false lapwing, full of trecherie,
The stare, that the counsaile can bewrie,
The tame ruddocke, and the coward kite,
The cocke, that horiloge is of thorpes lite.

The sparowe Venus' son, and the nightingale
That clepeth forth the fresh leaves new,
The swalowe, murdrer of the bees smale,
That maken honie of floures fresh of hew,
The wedded turtell, with his herte true,
The pecocke, with his angel fethers bright,
The fesaunt, scorner of the cocke by night.

The waker gose, the cuckowe ever unkind,
The poppingey, full of delicasy,
The drake, stroier of his owne kind,
The storke, wreker of aduoutry,
The hote cormeraunt, ful of glotony,
The ravin and the crowe, with her voice of care,
The throstell olde, and the frostie feldefare.

What should I say of foules of every kind,
That in this world have fethers and stature,
Men might in that place assembled find,

Before that noble goddess of Nature,
And eche of them did his busie cure,
Benignely to chese, or for to take
By her accorde, his formell or his make.

But to the point, Nature held on her hond,
A formell egle, of shape the gentillest,
That ever she among her workes fond,
The most benigne, and eke the goodliest,
In her was every vertue, at his rest
So farforth, that Nature her selfe had blisse,
To looke on her, and oft her becke to kisse.

Nature, the vicar of the almightie Lord,
That hote, colde, hevie, light, moist, and drie,
Hath knit, by even number of accord,
In easie voice, began to speake and say,
“Foules take hede of my sentence I pray,
And for your own ease, in furdryng of your need,
As fast as I may speak, I will me speed.

“Ye knowe wel, how on Saint Valentines day,
By my statute, and through my governance,
Ye do chese your makes, and after flie away
With hem, as I pricke you with pleasaunce,
But nathelesse, as by rightfull ordinaunce,
May I not let, for all this world to win,
But he that most worthiest is, shall begin.

“The tercell egle, as ye know full wele,
The foule royall, above you all in degre,
The wise and worthie, the secret true as stele,
The which I have formed, as ye may see,
In every parte, as it best liketh mee,
It nedeth not his shape you to devise,
He shall first chese, and speaken in his gise.

“ And after him, by order shall ye chese,
After your kind, everiche as you liketh,
And as your hap is, shall ye win or lese,
But which of you, that love most entriketh,
God sende him her, that sorest for him siketh :”
And therewithall, the tercell gan she call,
And said, “ My sonne the choise is to thee fall.

“ But nathelesse, in this condicion
Must be the choice, of everiche that is here,
That she agree to his election,
Who so he be, that should been her fere,
This is our usage alway, fro yere to yere,
And who so may at this time have his grace,
In blisfull time he came into this place.”

With hed enclined, and with ful humble chere,
This roial tercell spake, and taried nought,
“ Unto my souveraine lady, and not my fere,
I chose and chese, with will, herte, and thought,
The formell on your hand, so wel ywrought,
Whose I am all, and ever will her serve,
Doe what her luste, to doe me live or sterue.

“ Besechyng her of mercy, and of grace,
As she that is my ladie souveraine,
Or let me die here present in this place,
For certes long may I not live in paine,
For in my herte is corven every vaine,
Having regard onely to my trouth,
My dere herte, have on my wo some routh.

“ And if I be found to her untrue,
Disobeisaunt, or wilfull negligent,
Avauntour, or in processe love a newe,

I pray to you this be my judgement,
That with these foules I be all to rent,
That ilke day that she me ever find
To her untrue, or in my gilte unkind.

“ And sith that none loveth her so well as I,
Although she never of love me behet,
Than ought she be mine through her mercy,
For other bonde can I none on her knet :
For wele nor wo never shall I let
To serve her, how farre so that she wende,
Say what you list, my tale is at an ende.”

Right as the fresh redde rose newe,
Against the sommer Sunne coloured is,
Right so for shame all waxen gan the hewe
Of this formell, whan she heard all this,
Neither she answerde well, ne said amis,
So sore abashed was she, till that Nature
Said, “ Doughter drede you not, I you assure.”

Another tercell egle spake anon,
Of lower kind, and said “ That should not be,
I love her better than ye doe, by saint John,
Or at the least I love her as well as ye,
And lenger have served her in my degree,
And if she should have loved for long loving,
To me alone had be the guerdouing.

“ I dare eke say, if she me finde false,
Unkind jangler, or rebell in any wise,
Or jelous, doe me hang by the halse,
And but I beare me in her servise
As well as my wit can me suffice,
Fro point to point her honour for to save,
Take she my life, and all the good I have.”

The third tercell egle answerde tho,
“ Now sirs, ye see the little leaser here,
For every foule crieth out to be ago
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere :
And eke Nature her self ne will not here
For taryng her, not half that I would sey,
And but I speake, I must for sorrow dey.

“ Of long service avaunt I me nothing,
But as possible is me to die to day,
For wo, as he that hath be languishing
This twenty winter, and wel it happen may,
A man may serve better, and more to pay,
In half a year, although it were no more,
Than some man doth, that hath served full yore.

“ I ne say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no service that may my lady please,
But I dare say, I am her trewest man,
As to my dome, and fainest wolde her please :
At short wordes, till that death me cease,
I will be hers, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in all that herte may bethinke.”

Of al my life sith that day I was borne,
So gentle plee in love or other thing,
Ne herde never no man me beforne,
Who so that had leiser and conning
For to rehearse their chere, and their speaking,
And from the morrow gan this spech last,
Till downward went the Sunne wonder fast.

The noyse of foules for to be deliverd,
So loude rang, “ Have don and let us wend,”
That well weend I, the wood had al to shiverd :

“Come off” they cryd, “alas, ye will us shend,
Whan shal your cursed pleding have an end,
How should a judge either party leve,
For ye or nay, without any preve?”

The goos, the duck, and the cuckowe also,
So cried “Keke, keke, Cuckow, Queke queke
Through mine cares the noise went tho. [hie,”
The goos said than “Al this n’is worth a flie,
But I can shape hereof a remedie,
And will say my verdite, faire and swithe,
For water foule, whoso be wroth or blithe.”

“And I for worm foule,” said the sole cuckow
“For I will of mine own autorite,
For common spede, take on me the charge now,
For to deliver us, it is great charite.”
“Ye may abide a while, yet perde,”
(Quod the turtel) “if it be your will,
A wight may speak, it were as good be still.

“I am a sede foule, one the unworthiest,
That wote I well, and leest of conning,
But better is that a wights tonge rest,
Than entremete him of such doing
Of which he neither rede can nor sing,
And who so it doth, full foule himself aloyeth,
For office uncommitted oft annoyeth.”

Nature, which that alway had an care,
To murmure of the lewdenesse behind,
With facond voicesaid, “Hold your tongues there,
And I shall soone, I hope, a counsaile find,
You for to deliver, and fro this noyse unbind:
I charge of every flock ye shall one call,
To say the verdite of you foules all.”

Assented were to this conclusion,
The birdes all : and foules of ravine
Have chosen first by plaine election,
The tercelet of the faucon to define
All hir sentence, and as him lust to termine,
And to Nature him they did present,
And she accepteth him with glad entent.

The tercelet said than in this manere,
“ Full hard it were to preve it by reason,
Who loveth best this gentle formell here,
For everich hath such replication,
That by skills may none be brought adoun,
I cannot see that arguments availe,
Than seemeth it there must be battaile.”

“ All ready” (quod these eagle tercels tho :).
“ Nay sirs” (quod he) “ if that I durst it say,
Ye do me wrong, my tale is not ydo :
For sirs, taketh nat a greefe I pray,
It may not be as ye would, in this way,
Ours is the voice, that have the charge in hand,
And to the judges dome ye must stand.

“ And therefore peace I say, as to my wit,
Me would thinke, how that the worthiest
Of knighthood, and lengest had used it,
Most of estate, of blood the gentillest,
Were fitting for her, if that her lest,
And of these three, she wote her selfe I trow
Which that he be, for it is light to know.”

The water foules have their heads laid
Togider, and of short avisement,
Whan everiche had this verdite said,

They said soothly all by one assent,
How that the goos, with the facond gent,
That so desireth to pronounce our nede,
Shal tel her tale, and praid to God her spede.

And for these water foules tho began
The goose to speake, and in her cakeling,
She said, "Peace now, take keep every man,
And herken which a reason I shall forth bring,
My witte is sharpe, I love no tarrying,
I say I rede him, tho he were my brother,
But she will love him, let him love another."

"Lo here a parfite reason of a goose"
(Quod the sperhauke) "never mote she the,
Lo such a thing it is to have a tongue lose :
Now parde foole, yet were it better for the
Have held thy peace, than shewd thy nicete,
It lieth nat in his wit, nor in his will,
But sooth is said, a fole cannot be still."

The laughter arose of gentill foules all,
And right anone the seed foules chosen had
The turtle true, and gan her to hem call,
And prayed her to say the sooth sad
Of this matter, and asked what she rad ?
And she answerd, that plainly her entent
She would shew, and soothly what she ment.

"Nay, God forbede a lover should chaunge,"
The turtle said (and wex for shame all red)
"Though that his lady evermore be straunge,
Yet let him serve her alway, till he be deed,
Forsooth, I praise not the gooses reed,
For tho she died, I would none other make,
I will be hers, till that the death me take."

“ Well ybourded” (quod the duck) “ by my hat,
That men should love alway causelesse,
Who can a reason find, or wit in that,
Daunceth he merry that is mirthlesse,
Who should recke of that is retchlesse,
Yequeke yet,” quod the duck, “ full well and fair,
There be mo sterres in the skie than a pair.”

“ Now fie churle,” quod the gentle tercelet,
“ Out of the dunghill came that word aright,
Thou canst not see which thing is well beset,
Thou farest by love as owles do by light,
The day hem blindeth, full well they see by night,
Thy kind is of so low wretchedness,
That what love is, thou canst not se nor gess.”

Tho gan the cuckow put him forth in preace,
For foule that eateth worme, and said blive :
“ So I,” quod he, “ may have my make in peace,
I retch not how long that ye strive,
Let ech of hem be soleine all hir live,
This is my rede, sens they may nat accord,
This short lesson needeth not record.”

“ Ye, have the giutton filde his paunch,
Than are we well,” said the emerlon,
“ Thou murdrer of the heysugge on the braunch
That brought thee forth, thou ruful glutton,
Live thou solein, wormes corruption,
For no force is of lack of thy nature,
Go, leude be thou while the world may dure.”

“ Now peace,” quod Nature, “ I commaunde here,
For I have heard all your opinion,
And in effect yet be we never the nere,

But finally, this is my conclusion,
That she her selfe shall have her election
Of whom her list, who so be wrothe or blithe,
Him that she cheseth, he shall her have as swithe.

“ For sith it may not here discussed be
Who loveth her best, as said the tercelet,
Than woll I done this favour to her, that she
Shall have right him, on whom her herte is set,
And he her, that his herte hath on her knet,
This judge I nature, for I may not lie
To none estate, I have none other eye.

“ But as for counsaile, for to chuse a make,
If I were reason, than would I
Counsaile you, the royall tercel take,
As said the tercelet, full skilfully,
As for the gentillest, and most worthy,
Which I have wrought so wel to my plesaunce
That to you it ought ben a suffisaunce.”

With dredeful voice that formel her answerd,
“ My rightful lady, goddess of Nature,
Sooth is, that I am ever under your yerd,
As is everich other creature,
And must be yours while my life may dure,
And therefore graunt me my first boone,
And mine entent, you woll I say right soone.”

“ I graunt it you,” quod she, and right anone
This formel eagle spake in this degree :
“ Almighty quene, unto this year be done
I aske respite for to avisen mee,
And after that to have my choice all free,
This all and some, that I would speak and sey,
Ye get no more, although ye do me dey.

“ I woll not serven Venus ne Cupide,
Forsooth as yet, by no manner way.”

“ Now sens it may none other ways betide”
(Quod Nature) “ here is no more to say,
Than would I that these foules were away,
Ech with his make, for taryng lenger here,”
And said hem thus, as ye shall after here.

“ To you speke I, ye tercelets” (quod Nature)
“ Beth of good herte, and serveth all three,
A yeare is not so long to endure,
And ech of you paine him in his degree,
For to do well, for God wote quit is she
Fro you this year, what after so befall,
This entremes is dressed for you all.”

And whan this werk brought was to an end,
To every foule Nature yave his make,
By even accord, and on hir way they wend,
And Lord the blisse and joy that they make,
For ech of hem gan other in his wings take,
And with hir neckes ech gan other winde,
Thanking alway the noble goddess of kinde.

But first were chosen foules for to sing,
As yere by yere was alway hir usaunce,
To sing a roundel at hir departing,
To do Nature honour and pleasaunce,
The note I trow maked was in Fraunce,
The words were such, as ye may here find,
The next verse, as I now have in mind.

Qui bien ayme tard oublye.

“ Now welcome summer, with thy sunnes soft,
That hast this winter weathers oversbake,
Saint Valentine, thou art full high on loft,

Which drivest away the long nights blake,
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake,
Well have they cause for to gladen oft,
Sens each of hem recovered hath his make,
Full blisful may they sing whan they awake."

And with the shouting whan hir song was do,
That the foules made at hir flight away,
I woke, and other bookes took me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway,
I hope ywis to rede so some day,
That I shall mete something for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I nill not spare.

EXPLICIT.



C. WHITTINGHAM, CHISWICK.







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